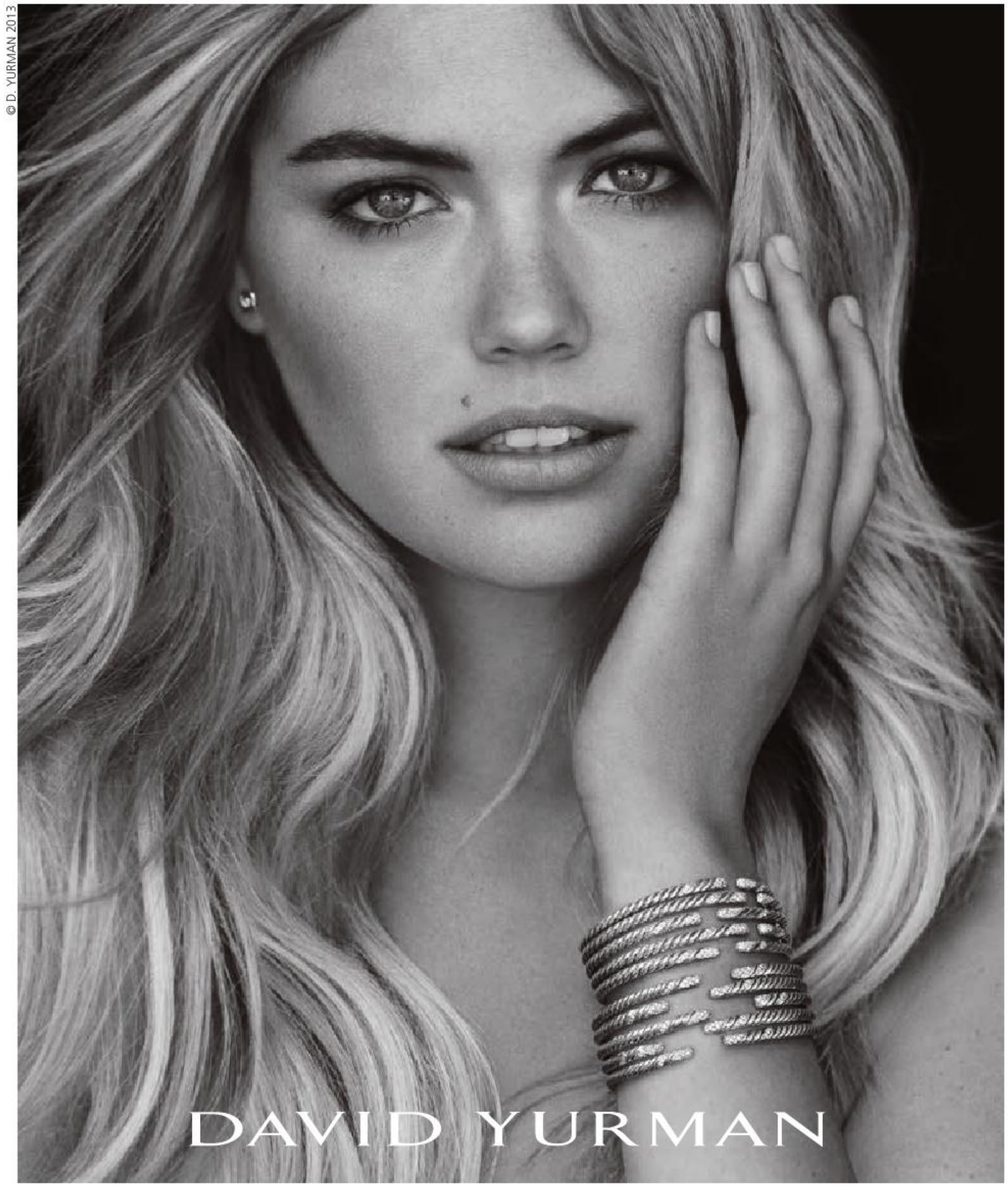
December 2013

Salt

The Art & Soul of Wilmington

Guess Who's Coming?

The Illustrated Twelve Days of Christmas



REEDS®
Jewelers

Mayfaire Town Center
910-256-2932

Wilmington's Waterfront Specialist

Fine Homes

www.VanceYoung.com

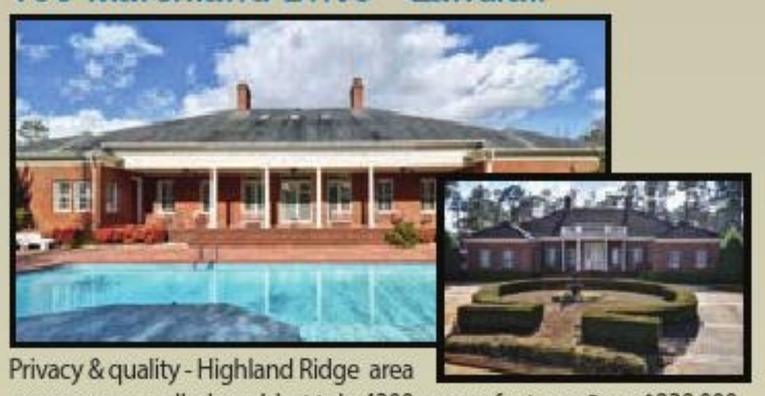
2021 Deer Island Lane • Landfall

Enjoy all the updates this stately brick residence offers: 2 fireplaces, coffered ceiling, open floor plan. $795,000

812 Gull Point Road • Landfall

New construction – neo-Federal design tucked into wooded cul-de-sac along bluff of Howe's Creek. $829,000

400 Marshland Drive • Landfall



Privacy & quality - Highland Ridge area over an acre, walled pool, hot tub; 4200 square feet one floor. $839,000

2060 Deer Island Lane • Landfall

Live in your own private resort! Outdoor kitchen - Viking appliances, grill, refrigerator, ice maker, firepit. $989,000

1611 Landfall Drive • Landfall

Brick villa home on high bluff over-looking Intracoastal Waterway and Wrightsville Beach. $1,199,000

7807 Masonboro Sound Road

Wilmington's "Magnificent Mile," views to Masonboro Island & ocean; 5.2 acres ; 2,000 sq. ft. cottage. $1,695,000

2299 Masons Point Place • Landfall

Home features nearly 5,000 square feet open, vaulted rooms; floor to ceiling glass on Howe Creek. $1,750,000

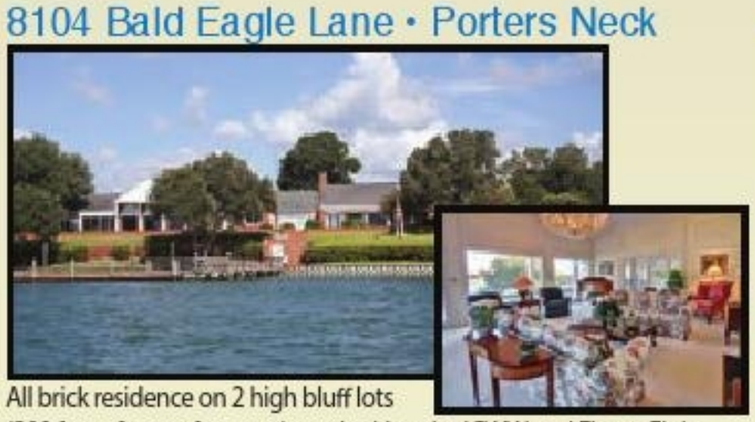
15 E. Asheville Street • Wrightsville Beach

One house back from oceanfront with covered porches; rooftop deck; 6 bedrooms, 5 baths, $1,795,000

2017 Balmoral Place • Landfall

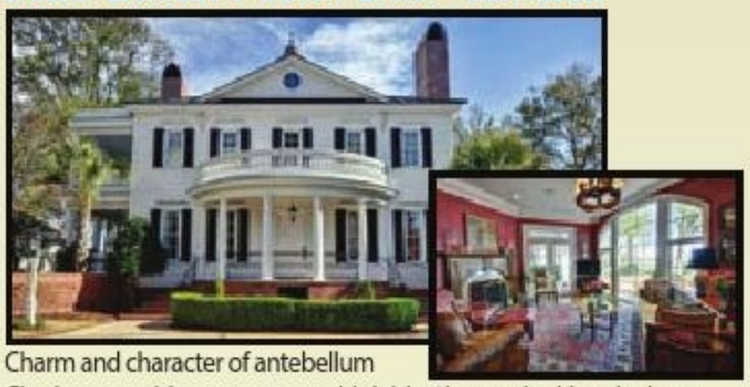
Mediterranean styled residence ; 8,000+ square feet of elegance overlooking waters of Howe Creek. $2,195,000

8104 Bald Eagle Lane • Porters Neck



All brick residence on 2 high bluff lots (200 feet of water frontage) overlooking the ICWW and Figure Eight Island. Floating dock can accommodate a 70' yacht. $2,295,000

2324 Ocean Point Place • Landfall



Charm and character of antebellum Charleston architecture set on a high bluff lot overlooking the Intra-coastal Waterway with all today's modern conveniences. $2,595,000

1221 Great Oaks Drive • Landfall

Natural light and stunning intracoastal waterway views; this home offers the best of both from nearly any seat in the house. $2,750,000

VANCE YOUNG

WWW.VANCEYOUNG.COM

Intracoastal REALTY CORPORATION

Experience the Exceptional

Vance Young
BROKER/REALTOR®
Office: 910.232.8850

Pick up your copy of

Salt
MAGAZINE

at these fine distribution points:

9 Restaurant
Achieve Medical Weight Loss
All American Mattress and Furniture
aMuse Artisanal Finery
Andrews Consilting Firm
Antiques of Old Wilmington
Armstrong's Amish Furniture
Artisan Design Company
Arts Council
Atlantic Spas & Billiards
Aqua Fedora
Best Western
Blockade Runner
Bloke Apparel
Brunswick Forest Sales Center
Bryant Real Estate
Cameron Art Museum
Cape Fear Academy
Cape Fear Hospital
Cape Fear Museum
Carolina Farmin
Causeway Cafe
Certus Bank
Chamber
Chops Deli
Compass Pointe
Cool Sweats
Cousins Deli
Crabby Chic
Crescent Moon
Doggie By Nature
En Vie
Eye Care Center
Envision Mortgage Corp
Fabric Solutions
Ferguson Bath Kitchen and Lighting
Figure Eight Yacht Club
First Bank Branches
First South Bank
Fisherman's Wife
Flying Pi
Fortunate Glass
Gallery of Oriental Rugs
Gentlemen's Corner
Glo Med Spa
Hampton Inn
Hilton Garden Inn
Hilton Riverside
Holiday Inn
Homewood Suites
Howard RV Cent
Intracoastal Realty
Java Dog
Jesters Café
Julia's Wilmington's Premier Florist
Kenan Auditorium
Landfall Realty
Laney Real Estate
Literacy Council
Little Dipper
Lou's FlowerWorld
Magnolia Greens
Manifest
Monkees
Moravian Church
Muirfield Townes at Echo Farm
Nest Fine Gifts & Interiors
NHRMC Auxillary Room
NHRMC Old Cape Fear
Occasions
Olympia Greek Restaurant
OmniStar Financial
Palm Garden
Paradigm Hair Salon
Peacock Alley
Polka Dot
Pomegranate Books
Port City Java Cafes
Premier Properties
Protocol
Residence Inn Wilmington Landfall
Salon Fringe
Salt Office
Salt Works
Shell Island
Station One
Stevens Hardware
Summit Plastic Surgery & Dermatology
Sweet and Savory
Thalian Association
Thalian Hall Center for Performing Arts
The Children's Museum
The Fisherman's Wife
The Ivy Cottage
The Shop at Seagate
Two Sisters Bookery
The Transplanted Garden
The Village Market
Thrill of the Hunt
UNCW offsite office
Village Market
Wilmington Visitor's Buraeu
Waterford Sales Center
Wlls Fargo
Wine and Design
Wrightsville Beach Museum
Wrightsville Beach Visitors Center

Salt
MAGAZINE

VOLUME 1, NO. 6

221 N. Front Street, Suite 201
Wilmington, NC 28401
910.833.7159

Jim Dodson, Editor
jim@saltmagazinenc.com

Andie Stuart Rose, Creative Director
andie@saltmagazinenc.com

Ashley Wahl, Senior Editor
910.833.7159 · ashley@saltmagazinenc.com

Kira Schoenfelder, Graphic Designer

Lauren Shumaker, Graphic Designer

Judi Hewett, Graphic Designer

Sara King, Proofreader

Mary Novitsky, Proofreader

CONTRIBUTORS
Serena Brown, Tom Bryant, Susan Campbell, Frank Daniels III, Clyde Edgerton, Jason Frye, Nan Graham, Virginia Holman, Ann Ipock, Jamie Lynn Miller, Sarah Lindsay, Gwenyfar Rohler, Dana Sachs, Noah Salt, Stephen E. Smith, Astrid Stellanova, Bill Thompson, Andrea Weigl

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Ned Leary, Rick Ricozzi, Mark Steelman, James Stefiuk, Ariel Keener, Bill Ritenour, Matt McGraw

David Woronoff, Publisher

ADVERTISING SALES

Diane Keenan, Sales & Circulation Director
(o) 910.833.7158 · (c) 910.833.4098
diane@saltmagazinenc.com

Tessa Young
518.207.5571 · tessa@saltmagazinenc.com

ADVERTISING GRAPHIC DESIGN
910.693.2469 · lauren@saltmagazinenc.com

©Copyright 2013. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

Salt *Magazine is published by* The Pilot LLC

THE PILOT

Some Reindeer Are More Rested Than Others

Monty, our official DUXIANA gift officer, loves his DUX® Bed. Take a tip from Monty and visit your DUXIANA store this holiday season to experience the comfort of a DUX Bed or to shop for unique yuletide gifts; Choose from fine linens, heavenly downs, and of course, the incomparable DUX bed.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from

DUXIANA®

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN SLEEPING

DUXIANA.COM

at The Mews
280 NW Broad Street
Southern Pines, NC
910.725.1577

at Cameron Village
400 Daniels Street
Raleigh, NC
919.467.1781

We Have Oprah's Favorites and Yours…

Opulence Of Southern Pines

at The Mews
280 NW Broad Street
Southern Pines, NC
910.692.2744

at Cameron Village
400 Daniels Street
Raleigh, NC
919.467.1781

OpulenceofSouthernPines.com

Serving The Carolinas & More For 18 Years ~ Financing Available

DECEMBER 2013

Departments

7 Homeplace
By Jim Dodson

10 SaltWorks
The best of Wilmington

13 Front Street Spy
By Ashley Wahl

14 Stagelife
By Gwenyfar Rohler

16 Omnivorous Reader
By Stephen E. Smith

19 She Talks Funny
By Ann Ipock

21 Spirits
By Frank Daniels III

22 Lunch With A Friend
By Dana Sachs

25 Accidental Southerner
By Nan Graham

27 Man on the Town
By Jason Frye

29 Notes From the Porch
By Bill Thompson

31 Birdwatch
By Susan Campbell

33 An Englishwoman in the South
By Serena Brown

34 Sporting Life
By Tom Bryant

36 Excursions
By Virginia Holman

70 Calendar
December happenings

74 Port City People
Out and about

79 Accidental Astrologer
By Astrid Stellanova

80 Papadaddy's Mindfield
By Clyde Edgerton

Features

39 If God Made Jam
Poetry by Sarah Lindsay

40 The Illustrated 12 Days of Christmas
Our favorite carol comes alive. Soon to be a minor motion picture

52 Baker's Retreat
By Andrea Weigl
At their home in Southport, a talented baker and his wife share their passion — baking bread with friends and strangers

54 Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore
By Ashley Wahl
This house is in the loving hands of the Masons now

64 A Cactus Story
By Jamie Lynn Miller
A spiney love affair

69 December Almanac
By Noah Salt
The origins of carols, our favorite plant, and the lazy gardener's Christmas list

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY NED LEARY

TYLER HUSTRULID, OUR COVER SANTA, IS AN ACCOMPLISHED PADDLE BOARDER AND LAVISH GIFT GIVER.

MICHELLE CLARK

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH AGENT.COM

Linda Woods
Realtor®/Broker
910.233.8900

Kelly Strickland
Realtor®/Broker
910.612.6537

Susan Snider
Realtor®/Broker
910.622.4394

Carey Harris
Realtor®/Broker
910.233.4511

Wendy McElhinney
Realtor®/Broker
910.515.5495

With You Every Step Of The Way...

Michelle Clark, ALHS, SFR
910.367.9767
mclark@intracoastalrealty.com

2220 Moreland Drive

Peaceful & private location on high lot on Landfall Lake. Open floorplan, wet bar, pool, hot tub, beautiful yard and impressive master suite.

$1,425,000

816 Wild Turkey Place

This is an entertainer's dream with a flowing floor plan that offers views of the waterway & the 7th hole on the Nicklaus Course. This is the perfect home for enjoying both friends & family!

$840,000

2221 Moreland Drive

Spacious brick home with beautiful covered porches and gorgeous rear yard water fall for serene living. 5 bed 3 bath with additional living space above garage and private upstairs area.

$799,900

23 Forest Hills Drive

The outside is just as charming as the interior of this elegant 4 bedroom home nestled among grand homes & lovely trees, in the highly desirable Forest Hills neighborhood. From the mahogany kitchen countertops to the delightful courtyard with water fountain & magnificent landscaping, you'll love all that you see.

$439,900

Alexander Koonce

910•509•1949 | cell: 910•233•7225 | 800•533•1840
www.alexanderkoonce.com

Intracoastal REALTY CORPORATION
Experience the Exceptional

Best Wishes for a wonderful holiday and a very Happy New Year!

Rediscover Salt Grass at Marsh Oaks

New Homes from the mid 300's

Homes built exclusively by ForeverHome

Desirable location in established community • Decorated model open daily

- 3 & 4 bedroom plans, 2,500 - 3,500 sq. ft.
- Community amenities: clubhouse, pool, 2 tennis courts, playground and more!
- To view all plans go to www.AlexanderKoonce.com or call Alexander today to schedule a showing

▲ 628 Bellhaven

◀ 631 Bellhaven

7000 West Creeks Edge

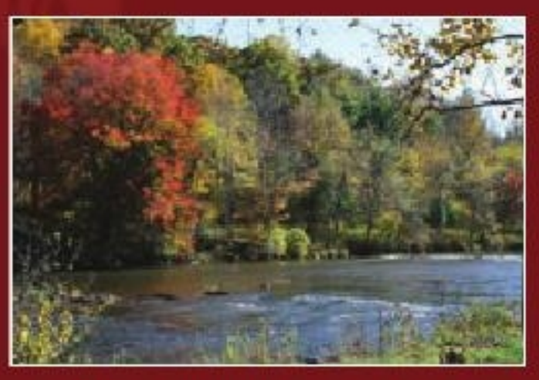
Cove Point. This lovely, spacious home offers an open flowing floor plan with a grand 2 story foyer, 10 foot ceilings throughout the first floor and chestnut floors in all formal areas. The chef's kitchen offers all top of the line stainless appliances, granite counters, and custom cherry cabinets, and 2 walk-in pantries. The first floor master suite includes a large bedroom, multiple walk-in closets, and an oversized bath. The second floor offers an open playroom, 3 large bedrooms, 2 big baths, a walk-in cedar closet, and a huge walk-in attic. The back yard is your own secluded private oasis with pool, spa, and terraced patios all surrounded by lush, mature palms. **$985,000**

1802 Hawthorne Road

South Oleander. Immaculately maintained home located in the sought after neighborhood of South Oleander. This low maintenance home, with all systems/features updated offers a large master down, 3 beds plus office/bonus space upstairs. It boasts hardwood floors throughout both levels, formal living room and dining room and a spacious wood paneled den with fireplace and sunroom which overlooks a lush and meticulously cared for yard. **$414,900**

Skye Ridge at the New River

Ashe County. This breath taking gated community with rare, private access to the New River, consists of ten mountain tracts that offer long range views of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Mount Jefferson, both of which are only 8 minutes away. Each tract is 8-12+ acres which enable each property owner to have their privacy and ensure their views. The community offers walking trails to common areas at both the top of the mountain and at the river. Only minutes to excellent restaurants, shopping, and the thriving art community of West Jefferson. Skye Ridge provides the consummate nature lover with all they could desire: beautiful scenery, abundant wildlife and American Heritage River for fishing, swimming and kayaking. **Call for details.**



EXPECT ROYAL TREATMENT
www.alexanderkoonce.com

1900 Eastwood Road • Suite 38 Lumina Station • Wilmington, NC 28403
zander@alexanderkoonce.com

The Hogmanay Ace

By Jim Dodson

Gratitude, goes an ancient French proverb, is the heart's memory.

When I heard the Queen Mum was ailing, I decided to take a few days and go see her. Simply put, there are only a handful of people in this world who mean more to me, a treasured friend and advisor who shaped my view of life and encouraged my writing as few others have done. Driving from Carolina to Maine — eighteen hours each way, a drive I've made probably a hundred times over the last thirty years — would give me time to think about what I needed to say to her. Life, like summer in Maine, is all too brief.

The Queen Mum, as I call her, is my former mother-in-law, the grandmother of my children, a tough and tender daughter of Glasgow's working class Netherlee neighborhood who lost her own parents after the Second World War and migrated to America with her brilliant husband, Sam, in the early 1960s, settling on a rambling 200-year-old farmhouse on a beautiful 500-acre farm above Moosehead Pond. The rural village of Harmony, Maine, aptly named, reminded Kate and Sam of their native Scottish hills.

While Sam traveled the world working as a defense contractor, Kate, who was educated at Glasgow University and read every significant work of Western literature at least twice, literally kept the home fires burning and became the local superintendent of schools, raising three great kids and becoming something of the village matriarch.

My first weekend at the farm in the late autumn of 1984 felt like stepping into a novel by Thomas Hardy. Kate was polite and friendly but clearly reserved in true Scottish fashion — no doubt wondering why her youngest, Alison, fresh from Harvard, was dating a chatty redneck Southerner. My initial connection was with Sam, who reminded me of the actor Peter O'Toole, home from his posting in Sri Lanka. A fine single malt Scotch helped bring us closer.

My second visit to the farm at the holidays proved even more challenging, though my former wife thinks this actually happened the following spring. Perhaps it did. But I have reason to believe this took place at Hogmanay, the Scottish new year, for reasons that have to do with my own family traditions.

By Christmas, Alison and I had big news to share, though I wasn't sure how the home folks in Harmony would greet the idea of a pending marriage.

Generally speaking, Christmas isn't such a big deal to native Scots, but Hogmanay is an annual rite accompanied by much dancing and drinking, fueled by traditional cookery and excellent Scotch whiskey.

In honor of the occasion, fires were banked high in the woodstoves and the BBC was dialed up on the shortwave radio at 7 p.m. sharp in order to hear London's Big Ben officially toll the arrival of the new year five hours away on the Scottish borders. At the final stroke of the bell, glasses were touched and toasts made. The fiddle music resumed and the house filled up with all sorts of buzzing folks, family and neighbors who dropped in out of the winter night to be part of the year's best gathering. Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve in Times Square had nothing on this country crowd.

A polite Southerner far from home, I wondered if I'd perhaps wandered into a real Brigadoon, the mythical Scottish village that appeared just one night a year. Sam Bennie rolled his smokes and thoughtfully topped up my Scotch, and his lovely daughter even coaxed me into the dance.

The next day — a bright, sunny New Year's Day, frigid as an Arctic ice floe — things settled down considerably after a big lunch of root veggies and roast mutton. My fiancée's siblings packed up and headed back to the city while Alison and Mum cleaned up the kitchen and put the house back in order. After this, Kate filled up the woodstove, made herself a cup of good Scottish tea, and sat down in her favorite wing chair by the front window to read.

Truthfully, I was a little bored, homesick for my own Carolina clan and not a little hung-over from my first Hogmanay celebration, missing my mom's collards and black-eyed peas and a peculiar little ritual I performed every New Year's Day through the end of my college years.

Some people read tea leaves or consult horoscopes to see what momentous events lie ahead. I had this goofy home-grown tradition of trying to hit a solitary golf ball over my parents' house with one cold swing. A ball that safely cleared the roof meant prosperity and happiness lay ahead. I'd never failed yet.

Silly, I know. But with marriage to a daughter of a real Brigadoon just off

We've got what you want under your tree!
nest
Fine Gifts and Interiors
Located in The Forum | 1125-T Military Cutoff | (910) 256-6378 | www.nestfinegifts.com | like us on facebook

in the mist, perhaps I needed the comfort and psychic reassurance of something familiar from home. Besides, the sand wedge revealed all.

Also, after an eight-year hiatus in Atlanta where I never took a day of vacation and had only picked up a golf club once or twice, I'd recently resumed playing on a golf course in Vermont where Rudyard Kipling had supposedly played the game. So while my fiancée leafed through old family photos and Mum enjoyed her tea and book in a house that was finally quiet, I fetched my trusty sand wedge and a golf ball and headed out to a snowy spot beyond the farm pond in front of the house.

I cleared off the snow and placed the ball on a mat of frozen grass. With little or no fanfare and no small trepidation, I peeled off my heavy coat and took dead aim at the chimney, where wood smoke swirled in the frigid air. One ball. No warm-up, just one decent *very* cold swing, I told myself, waggling my wedge.

Looking back, I made a golf swing Old Tom Morris himself would be proud to claim on Hogmanay. Happily, I watched the ball arc beautifully upward, clearly going to safely clear the roofline by several feet.

Unhappily, I grossly misjudged the distance.

The ball came down well shy of the target and passed through a small pane of glass in the window where my future mother-in-law was quietly reading her book and enjoying a pot of tea.

My heart stopped. My feet froze. I didn't know whether to turn and flee in the frozen wilderness of northern Maine or trudge in and face the music of an unhappy Scottish matriarch who didn't seem overly thrilled that her pretty daughter planned to marry a Southern rube who didn't know how to hit a decent wedge or dance a Scottish reel.

I hurried back to the house and opened the door and there sat Mum, still holding her book, giving me a look that said I would be banished from the clan before I was invited in. Pieces of window glass were everywhere, but the offending golf ball was strangely nowhere to be seen.

"Do you remember where the ball ended up?" I asked Kate on a beautiful Sunday morning after I arrived at her cottage several weeks ago. Many years ago, after Sam passed on, Kate moved to the pretty college town where Alison and I reared our children.

"Of course." Kate smiled at the memory. "It was in my tea cup."

"Do you remember your first words to me?"

"I think I must have forgotten."

So I smiled and told her — one of the nicest surprises of my life, effectively a welcome to the family.

"James," she remarked calmly, "I doubt if you could hit that shot again if your very life depended on it."

We quickly became good friends after what I regarded as my Hogmanay Ace, sharing a passion

for books and gardens and all things Scottish, having gentle but enlightening (for me at least) debates about politics and religion, eventually even traveling together to the Holy Land of golf where I once looked up a trio of Glaswegian gents who'd known her father — the club champion of Netherlee Golf Club — back in the late 1930s. As far as I know, Kate Bennie never swung a golf club in her life, yet her father's old mates welcomed me warmly one late summer afternoon, telling me stories with such dense Glaswegian brogues I could only make out every fourth or fifth word.

More importantly, Kate Bennie became a fixture in our home, the Queen Mum (as I took to calling her) and spiritual anchor of our growing family, the first reader of all my early books and cherished advisor on parenting and work. She never missed a school play or a weekend supper or a holiday of any sort.

Even when hard times came — a surprising separation and divorce after eleven years of marriage — the grace and constancy of Kate Bennie was a major reason we were able to restore our equilibrium and find a new working definition of the modern extended family. She remained a supportive fixture in both our homes, and the greatest grandmum ever.

She was the first to congratulate us both on our happy second marriages and even taught me to cook her famous Scottish mince — now a holiday tradition in my Southern home right along with the collards and black-eyed peas.

A simple but marvelous cook, she also gave me her best recipe for haggis, the largely inedible Scottish dish I've grown unaccountably fond of.

"It's very simple, James. Make the haggis from whatever you happen to find lying about in the kitchen. Then make a special Drambuie sauce to go with it. Cook the haggis well and feed it to the dog. Then drink the Drambuie sauce."

On the lovely Sunday morning we sat in her cheerful downstairs bedroom and talked last week, I filled her in on my latest book projects and about taking my wife, Wendy, on her first trip to Scotland. Kate wanted to hear all about the magazines I helped start and now edit back home in North Carolina. As usual, we even talked briefly about some of the same things we've spent nigh on three decades talking about — books we were reading, politics, golf and gardens, and especially the two kids who were now grown up and sharing an apartment in New York City, the greatest beneficiaries of the Queen Mum's wisdom and grace. I was pleased to learn from Kate that they each phone her every day — Maggie in the morning on her way to work, Jack in the evening on his way home.

Around the room were handsome hardwood shelves full of her favorite books and framed photos of her nine grandchildren. Squirrels and chickadees fed at the window feeders. Beyond, the woods were golden and red with the last of autumn's Northern glory.

When I saw she was tiring, as Alison said she would, I simply kissed the Queen Mum on the cheek and told her what I'd driven a thousand miles to say.

"Thank you for having me in your family," I whispered to her. "And for being the best friend a Southern boy far from home and family could ever have found."

"Do you know," I paused and added from the door, remembering maybe the most ironic twist of all. "I've never made a hole-in-one on a golf course — only a Hogmanay Ace."

This seemed to please her.

"Maybe, James," she said wryly, "you just need to keep trying."

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@saltmagazinenc.com

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THAT PERFECT WATERFRONT HOME, YOU NEED AN AGENT WHO'S NOT JUST GETTING HIS FEET WET.

As a native son of the area, Broker/Realtor, Lee Crouch has been exploring the unique surroundings of Wilmington, Wrightsville Beach and the Intracoastal Waterway since childhood. For 26 years, he has put that local knowledge into listing, marketing and selling beach and waterfront properties. Lee has built his reputation on a lifetime of experience and years of customer satisfaction.

110 Skystasail Drive
Walter Sprunt Home - Shandy Point - circa 1920
"Greenville Manor"
$1,695,000

101 Edgewater Lane
Gorgeous Home with boat slip.
Edgewater
$1,350,000

6400 Westport Drive
Wilmington
Fabulous custom traditional home
Boat slip in protected marina
$995,000

316 Beach Road North
Figure Eight island
Ocean Front, open floor plan, private lot
$2,295,000

Intracoastal
INTRACOASTALREALTY.COM

Lee Crouch as a young boy preparing for a sailboat race. Wrightsville Beach, circa 1968

BROKER 25 Years REALTOR

LEE CROUCH
Waterfront Specialist

523 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina 28480
www.leecrouch.com **800.533.1840** or **910.512.4533** *leecrouch@intracoastalrealty.com*

SaltWorks

Drink, Drink and Be Merry

Twelve Drinks of Christmas (count 'em) at the Brooklyn Arts Center will be held on Friday, December 13, 7 p.m., and again on Saturday, December 14, same time. There, a dozen select bars will present their own seasonal cocktail for your sampling pleasure. Tickets are $25 if you buy them early, and include a generous swallow of each drink, heavy appetizers provided by Canape, doughnuts by Nine Bakery & Lounge, and a coffee bar courtesy of Port City Java. DJ Battle will add to the holiday spirit, although, after twelve drinks, you may be singing a tune of your own. The tasting ends at 9 p.m., cash bar at the BAC to follow. Wear something festive. All proceeds will go to the Cape Fear Literacy Council. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Tickets and more information: www.12drinksofchristmas.eventbrite.com.

Save the Date

Bride to be? This one's for you. On Saturday, January 18, from 4–8 p.m., experience six themed reception and ceremony sites and mingle with the Port City's top wedding professionals during a self-guided tour of historic downtown Wilmington, aka, Wedding Row. Courtyards and Cobblestones includes live music from local artists, plus a chance to win fantastic jewelry giveaways from REEDS Jewelers. Admission: $18/online; $25/at the door. For more information, visit www.courtyardsandcobblestones.com.

Jingle All the Way

Have a (jingle) ball at the Arboretum on Saturday, December 7, 6 p.m., with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres followed by dinner and dancing with live music by The Imitations. Tickets for the Jingle Ball are $100. Proceeds support the fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Arboretum. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For more information, call (910) 798-7671 or visit www.gardeningnhc.org.

Happiness is Homemade

Contemporary local artisans and craftspeople bring their handmade wares to the table, so to speak, at the Holiday Pop-up Artisan Market at The Artworks on December 14 and 15. Original artwork, jewelry, pet items, artisan food products, clothing and accessories, children's items and other homemade goodies. The handmade soap will smell good enough to eat. As for the bake sale? Don't miss it. Proceeds benefit Feast Down East; a donation to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina will provide free entry into the Handmade Wilmington Shopper's Choice raffle. Saturday market is open from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Sunday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. The Artworks, 200 Willard Street, Wilmington. For more information, visit www.handmadewilmington.org or www.facebook.com/handmadewilmington.

Spotty Says Dance

The eighth annual Wilmington Fur Ball happens on Saturday, December 7, from 6:30–10:30 p.m. This black tie, red carpet gala supports the rescue and adoption efforts of Pender Humane Society and Adopt an Angel of New Hanover County. Evening includes lavish hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine and champagne, live and silent auctions, entertainment by psychic Pat Vlach, plus live music by local powerhouse Bibis Ellison. Indulge yourself. Tickets: $90. Country Club of Landfall, 800 Sun Runner Place, Wilmington. For more information, call (910) 233-4793 or visit www.wilmingtonfurball.com.

Peanuts for Christmas

On December 8, the Cape Fear Community College Drama Club presents *A Charlie Brown Christmas* at 3 and 5 p.m. The play, based on the original 1965 Christmas cartoon, will be performed by live actors, and feature musicians performing the original Vince Guaraldi jazz score. Tickets ($5; $4/students; $1/children) will be sold at the door thirty minutes prior to show time. Attendees can receive one dollar off admission with the donation of a non-perishable item for Mother Hubbard's Cupboard food bank. All proceeds from the play wil benefit the National Brain Tumor Society. Cash only, please. Union Station Auditorium, intersection of Front Street and Red Cross Street, downtown Wilmington. Information: (910) 362-7783.

Don't Miss Tea Time

Holiday Tea at the Bellamy happens Monday, December 16, 2 p.m. You're all invited. Sandwiches, scones, desserts and confections will be served, and you can sip tea in the parlors of this stately antebellum mansion. Prepare yourself for the refinement and charm. Tickets: $35. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Tea ticket hotline: (910) 232-0127. Or, for more information: www.bellamymansion.org.

A Classic Choice

The Wilmington Symphony Orchestra and UNCW Opera Outreach Program present a fully staged performance of Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* on Saturday, December 7, 8 p.m., and Sunday, December 8, 4 p.m. First performed on December 24, 1951, at New York City's Rockefeller Center by the NBC Opera Theatre, Menotti's one-act opera was broadcast live on television as the debut production of the Hallmark Hall of Fame. An estimated five million people watched — the largest audience ever to see a televised opera. Tickets: $27; $6/students. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 962-3500. Info: www.wilmingtonsymphony.org.

Three, Two, One . . .

Celebrate New Year's Eve at Thalian Hall with a festive evening featuring a live Broadway theater production by City Stage, plus a DJ, dinner and dancing, and a champagne toast to bring in 2014. Festivities commence at 7 p.m. Tickets: $125. Proceeds benefit Thalian Hall, located at 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

Dear Santa

If your little Ralphie Parkers have been good, consider bringing them to Greenfield Lake Park on Thursday, December 5, 6 p.m., for a tree lighting and a visit from Santa. After that, don't miss the screening of *A Christmas Story*, the 1983 classic that never gets old. Free admission; concessions available for purchase. Greenfield Lake Park, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. For more information, visit www.wilmingtonnc.gov/greenfieldtree.

A WALK THROUGH WEDDING ROW

COURTYARDS & COBBLESTONES

WILMINGTON, NC

SATURDAY JANUARY 18, 2014

4:00PM TO 8:00PM

COURTYARDS & COBBLESTONES IS AN EVENT DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE HISTORIC WEDDING VENUES AND WEDDING PROFESSIONALS ON A DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON SELF GUIDED TOUR.

LET US HELP YOU PLAN YOUR SPECIAL DAY.
TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE.

ADMISSION $18 ONLINE, $25 AT THE DOOR

SPONSORED BY:

REEDS Jewelers

Pressed COTTON
GOODS for GATHERINGS

COURTYARDSANDCOBBLESTONES.COM

Gifts from the Sea

Beachcombing and the enchanted words of strangers

By Ashley Wahl

Two crows perch on a lamppost on Johnnie Mercer's Pier while the third struts past a portly man slitting the silvery belly of a twenty-plus-pound king mackerel.

"Actually, this one's a queen," says the man with a jolly laugh. He gives the guts a gentle prod, fingers snug inside his orange gloves. "Oh," he says, eyes twinkling as he takes a closer look. "It's a king after all. We'll just call him a prince."

James Neil's white whiskers can't hide his boyish spirit, even when he's cleaning out the fish his buddy caught.

"Me, James and Bubba Cox, we've been fishing together for so long . . ." says Ed Godwin, who remembers the day bikinis were introduced to Wrightsville Beach. "Just look at all the gray hairs we've got."

It's half past 3 o'clock on a Tuesday afternoon and the sea is as calm as a whisper. Ed stares out at the violet-gray horizon toward Crystal Pier.

"Remember the high day we had out there?" he asks.

James beams, wiping his brow with the back of his glove.

"We caught sixty-seven mackerel. No, sixty-eight. Fourth of July, wasn't it?"

Nearby, a towheaded boy squeals with glee as his daddy reels in a slip of a fish that's small enough to use for bait. The kid takes a picture of it with an iPhone, then lets it go.

* * *

Low tide and the beach is quiet. Footprints wind along the shore until they disappear, muddled by another's tracks or swallowed by the sea. Bare feet delight in the silky sand near the dunes where shorebirds sit on sea oats like broomsticks — quidditch, anyone? — or down by the water, on a scaly carpet of broken shells.

Among the ocean treasures: half a sand dollar, a long brown feather, and a scallop shell, red as a ruby. Maybe someone else will find them.

A wise old gull observes the seascape and a pelican makes a mighty plunge.

* * *

On the North End of Wrightsville, a couple comb the beach.

"Everybody can find shells," says Philip Driver. "We look for sea glass, diamonds, tennis bracelets . . ."

His bride reveals a handful of mostly amber sea glass. "We like to have little contests," says Stephanie, who keeps her treasures in her right pocket. Philip's loot — some amber, some green, and a large triangle of tumbled white glass — is in her left pocket. No jewelry, she says, but today Philip is winning.

"Our daughter was married last weekend in Raleigh," the Drivers explain. They came here, their second home, to unwind.

Do they know about the mystery mailbox on the beach?

Oh, yes. When nor'easters come through, says Philip, he and Stephanie find shells scattered along the beach with messages written on them.

That mailbox is how Match.com got started, he continues. "You can probably find a husband in there."

Stephanie wonders if the mailbox is still there, or if a storm has taken it. She looks down, searching for more glass.

"The walk is different every time."

* * *

There it is — the mailbox with no address, up near the dunes. Inside: spiral journals filled with poetry and musings, kind words to strangers, prayers and confessions, even a note from a wandering house cat. Scribble a message if you'd like, or leave an offering. Broken sunglasses, red carnations, sea stones . . .

Various shells, some broken, line the horizontal wooden beam on the mailbox post. Under one, two words: *Be better.*

Two college boys stumble upon this shrine by accident. Robby, the one from Pittsburgh, studies biology at UNCW. Anthony's an English major. His wide grin and New York accent spell lady charmer.

They read, mostly with reverence, enchanted by the words of strangers.

I leave a tumbled black conch — big as a fist, or a human heart.

Thirty-two pelicans glide, single file, just above the water. Suddenly, it starts to rain.

Front Street may be home base, but senior editor Ashley Wahl is prone to wander.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSH ROCK

Cratchit for Christmas

For playwright Ron Hasson, a date with Charles Dickens opened a floodgate of creative ideas

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

By Gwenyfar Rohler

For Ron Hasson, 2012 brought an unexpected Christmas gift: Bob Cratchit. Alisa Harris of TheatreNOW was looking for a dinner theater-appropriate show for the holidays. "I had really wanted to do something like Patrick Stewart's one-man *A Christmas Carol*," the actor side of Hasson confesses. "But they wanted original scripts or original adaptations . . . not a one-man show. Alisa was like, 'Why don't you write an adaptation of *A Christmas Carol?*'" And so he did. Cratchit and Hasson share a similar good will toward all and a generous giving spirit. But the similarity ends there. Where Cratchit would cower, Hasson has an actor's charisma and big personality.

A year ago Hasson adapted a story for the stage about a man visited by three ghosts who changed his life. Perhaps it was Hasson's own premonition of the three shows to come that would leave him, creatively at least, a

very wealthy man indeed. This holiday season, TheatreNOW is reprising Hasson's *A Christmas Carol* with him playing Scrooge. Could there be a more specific statement of approval for a performer and playwright?

Actually, when he began discussions about *A Christmas Carol* with TheatreNOW, Hasson was unintentionally in the middle of writing his first full length play. It began more as therapy than anything else. "It started out with me angrily writing after the vote in May," says Hasson, referring to the passage of Amendment One in North Carolina in 2012. Hasson needed to channel the hurricane of emotions that the vote banning same-sex marriage brought up for him. "I was in the middle of theater type stuff and [this play] was a complete second outlet — it didn't start as a theater thing necessarily at all . . ." he says, shaking his head at the happenstance of all of it. "The *Christmas Carol* thing happened and I was like, 'OK, why don't I take all this stuff and, I didn't know I could do it — a full length play?'" Fortunately for Hasson and other writers, Wilmington has an abundance of opportunities for people to test their work and get feedback. Browncoat Pub and Theatre provided an entree for Hasson to workshop a few pieces of the play during a monologue showcase titled *Baring It*.

When *One Up*, the full version of Hasson's play inspired by Amendment One, went into full production at the Browncoat in June of this year, it was a whole different ball game. "I literally developed a hunch watching it because my stomach was trying to crawl into my spine," Hasson notes.

But his baby was in the carefully chosen hands of director Nick Smith. Hasson and Smith met during a production of *Hamlet* that Smith directed at The Browncoat. But it was a 2011 production of the post-9/11 play, *The Guys*, that revealed to Hasson Smith's true talent as a director. "I hardly ever get to play that kind of focal character," Hasson muses. As a long-time character actor, his turn as one of two people on stage in *The Guys* was a departure for him — and a good one. "I got to know what kind of director [Smith] was — what his emotional input is to something that is already very emotional." *One Up* started as a political diatribe and became a very sensitive show exploring the gray areas of human love. It was also the journey of Hasson coming to terms with something in the past that he cannot change: the election results. For a first full-length show to go from seed to production, it was not only a hefty undertaking, but its success was quite a feather in the cap for both the playwright and the director. "Once I knew it was something I wanted to produce, it didn't even occur to me to ask anyone else," Hasson states emphatically. "I knew he would understand backward and forward even though he's not gay — it turned out being a lot less political and a lot more emotional. He's a master of as much as a 35-year-old can be a master of anything."

All that was just a prelude to the next act: Hasson, a long-time musician and songwriter, is making the leap to musical theater with his updated interpretation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. "The devil in this case, Hades, has to do a little bit more than snap his fingers — he poses as a music executive." Hassons laughs. "I've written the music already . . . I was more of a poet-song person as every mixed-up twenty-something ought to be." He undersells himself, having begun his composition career in college with the score for Brecht's *Mother Courage* for a string quartet. For Hasson, the future certainly looks bright.

A Christmas Carol will be performed at TheatreNOW on Fridays and Saturdays from November 22 through December 21, 7 p.m. For tickets and more information, visit www.theatrewilmington.com or call (910) 399-3NOW.

Gwenyfar Rohler fell in love with theater at Thalian Hall on her sixth birthday. She spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

Pelican Family Medicine

"We're here and we care"

Pelican Family Medicine is a small Family Medicine Clinic started in 2001 by Dr M. Samuel Armitage.

In 2006 we opened our Satelite Clinic, Pelican Family Medical Clinic, located at 204 South Walker in Burgaw.
In 2008 we opened our second Satelite Clinic at 5905 Carolina Beach Road in the Monkey Junction Area of Wilmington.
Since 2003 Dr Armitage has been joined by Cheryl Smith, FNP-C, Carrie Waters, PA, and Marian Guill, FNP-C

Our goal is to help you and your family achieve the best possible health.

We are a full service practice, dealing with pediatric care, adolescent medicine, women's health, adult medicine, preventive medicine, and geriatric care.

Dr Armitage has special interest in weight loss counseling, diabetic care and education, preventive care and health care screening, and the treatment of common dermatologic problems.

5429 Wrightsville Avenue
Wilmington, NC - Telephone (910) 792 -1001
(just east of Cape Fear Hospital with public transportation available)

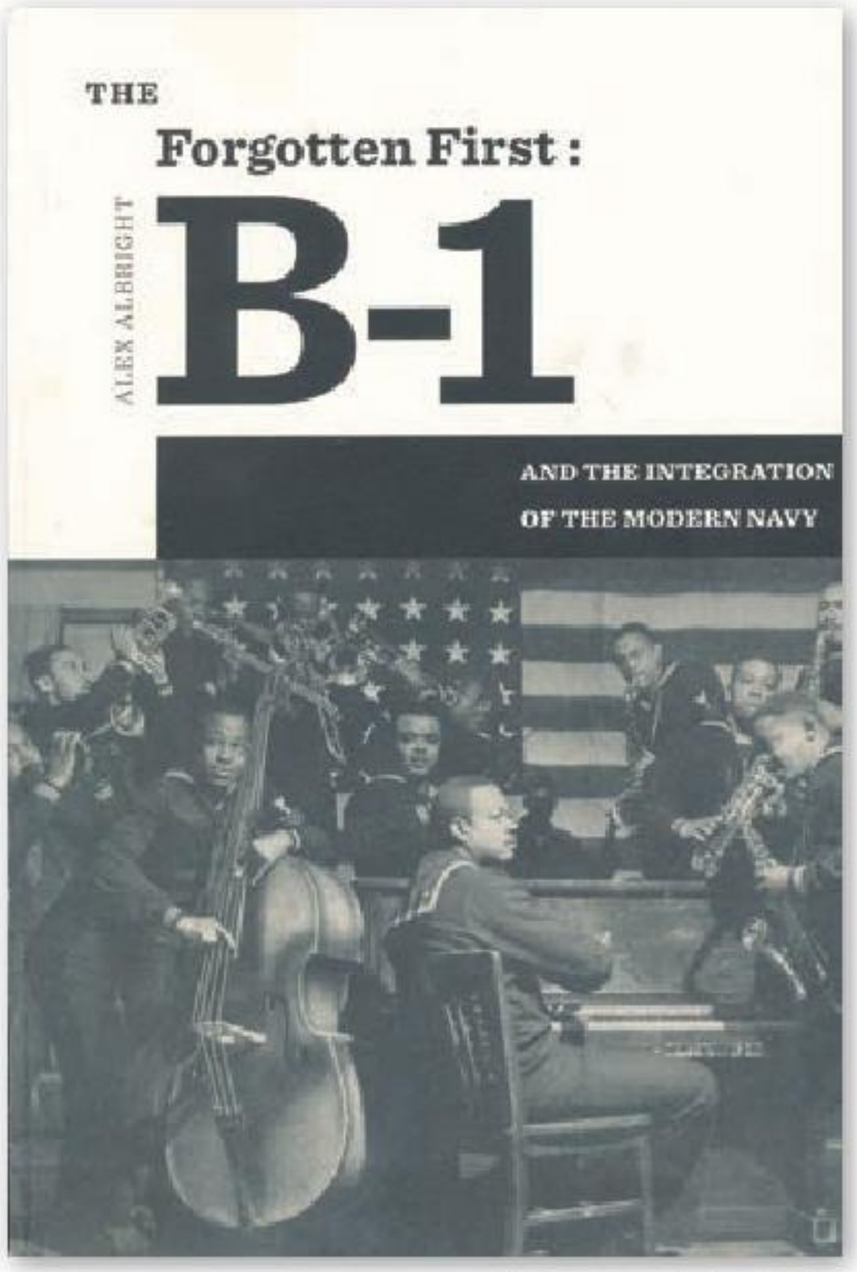
Original Paintings & Prints

Shore to Shore ART GALLERY

10-2 OR BY APPOINTMENT MONDAY THRU SATURDAY
5423 WRIGHTSVILLE AVE • WILMINTON, NC 28403
910.616.1966 • SHORETOSHORELLC@YAHOO.COM

Band of Brothers

How a band of talented military musicians drawn from North Carolina's segregated high schools and colleges paved the way for racial understanding in Jim Crow America



By Stephen E. Smith

We associate the successes of the civil rights movement with well-publicized personal moments — Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on the bus, or Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech — but progress in securing civil liberties often goes unheralded and is interrupted by social and legislative reactionism. Alex Albright's thoroughly researched and beautifully written *The Forgotten First: B1 and the Integration of the Modern Navy* is the history of a World War II military band composed of black North Carolinians whose role in the struggle for equal rights has heretofore gone unacknowledged.

In June 1941, the Navy recruited a 45-member band of "men of the Negro race only" to be attached to the regional pre-flight training school in Chapel Hill. Before the establishment of B-1 (the band's military designation), the Navy employed blacks as messmen only, and white Southern officers were always placed in command of black units because "It was generally considered that white Southerners were the only ones who knew 'how to handle' blacks."

The men of B-1 were recruited from Greensboro's Agricultural and Mechanical College (now North Carolina A&T State University), where they'd been trained by three of the best classical musicians of the 20th century — Bernard Mason, Warner Lawson and Nathaniel Dett — and from Dudley High School, which had a reputation for graduating outstanding musicians.

"The men that were recruited for the B-1 band were the best," recalls trumpeter Huey Lawrence. "They were the men who knew music. We read it; we could arrange it. Most people back then thought black music was just jamming. But we played the classics, for the officers, the admirals, for dances, for movie stars. We played stocks, concert music and marching songs."

The B-1 recruits understood that they were breaking down racial barriers and that their all-black band was an experiment with integration, albeit on a unit level. They were promised by the Navy that they'd be stationed in Chapel Hill for the duration, and they were delighted with the notion that they'd be a presence at the all-white flagship university in their home state.

After completing basic training in Norfolk, B-1 made their grand entrance into Chapel Hill by marching down Franklin Street on August 2, 1942, where they were greeted, according to various witnesses and participants, with varying degrees of acceptance. James Parsons led the band on that Saturday march and recalled, "People started coming out on Franklin Street to see what was happening. They started jeering at us, calling us all kinds of ugly names, most of them racial slurs. They were throwing mud and rocks at us. I got cut on my cheek. At least one instrument was dented. My men had mud all over them. But in the midst of all that, they held their heads high." Other band members recalled their reception as warm and welcoming, and the August 2 march remains a topic of some disagreement among surviving band members.

But B-1 soon became a fixture in Chapel Hill. They played daily for the 8 a.m. flag raising and marched pre-flight cadets to and from class. Their daily schedule included regimental reviews, bond rallies, football and basketball games, concerts, patriotic assemblies and Sunday afternoon concerts in the Forest Theater. A dance band, the Cloudbusters, was organized from B-1 officers and quickly became a favorite at officer's clubs and smokers. As one observer recalled, "They made Chapel Hill very proud. They definitely changed the town's perceptions of blacks at the time — they had a significant effect."

B-1 members could not attend classes at the university, and they weren't

encouraged to frequent the white businesses on Franklin Street, but their influence on the community, and by extension, the state, is undeniable. Their talent earned them a level of respect that wasn't afforded blacks working menial jobs at the university, and their appearance on campus and in town did much to define UNC as the bastion of progressive idealism that it would later become.

The band's most visible moment occurred in July 1943 when they were the featured attraction at the launching of the USS *Merrick* at the Wilmington, North Carolina, shipyards, where 5,300 blacks were employed and an audience of over 20,000 was in attendance. Governor Broughton was the keynote speaker and touted advancements in "racial harmony and progress," citing nine-month school for blacks, supplemental teachers' pay, and improvements made at state-supported black colleges.

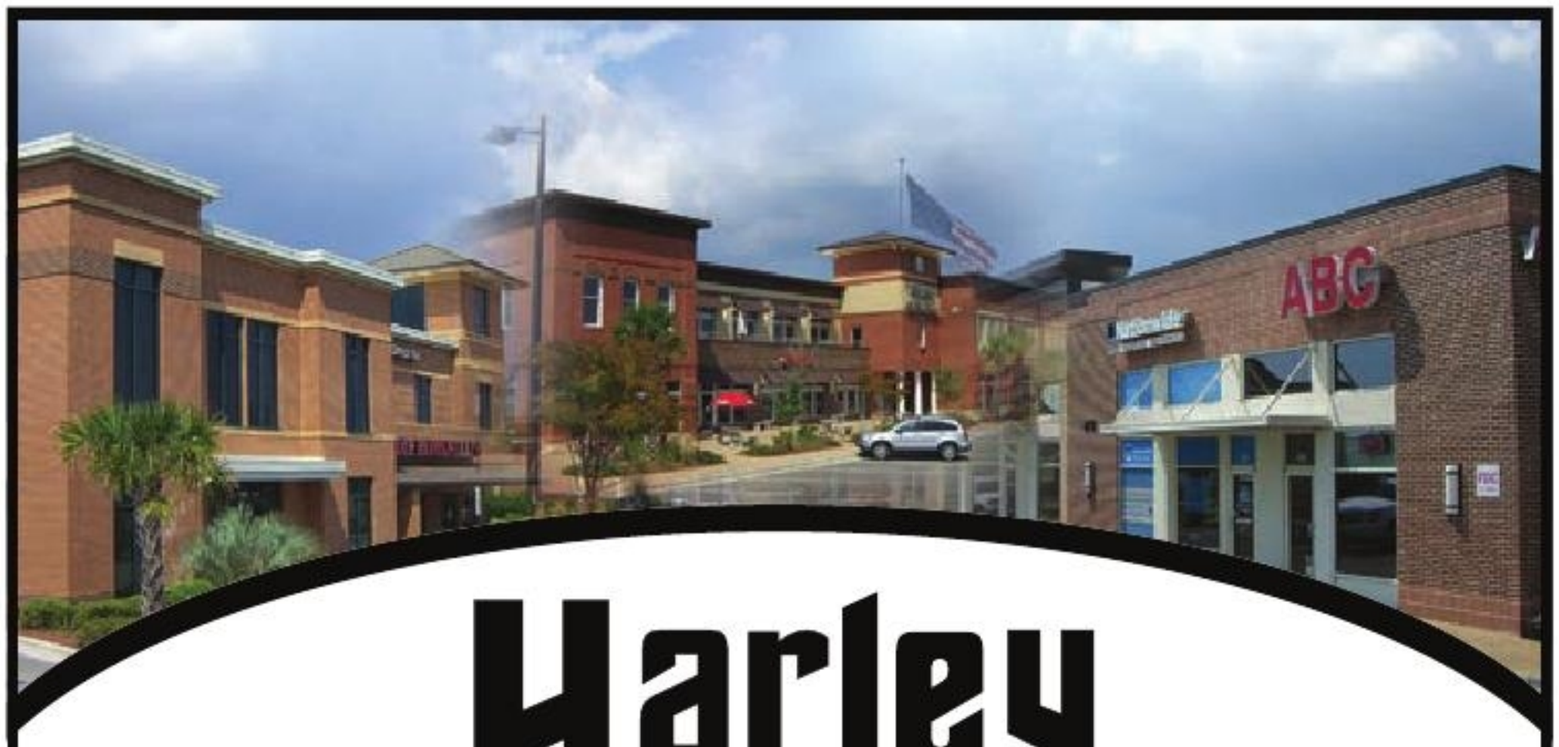
In April 1944, B-1 was transferred to Hawaii, where they were housed on a base reserved for blacks only. They were allowed in the local restaurants and bars but were often refused service, and while their instruments were in transit, the men performed unskilled jobs such as cutting bamboo and painting. Instruments in hand, B-1 played for ship embarkations and for wounded men returning from the Pacific theater. And, of course, they marched in the VJ parade in Honolulu. "We must have marched for three hours that day," recalls piccolo player Abe Thurman. "I think we marched through every street in Honolulu."

But B-1's return to postwar America was dispiriting. Jim Crow remained in force in North Carolina, and the returning vets had to abide by the whites only doctrine. "That really got to us," recalls cornet player Bennie Laikin. "I felt real bad. . . . Things seemed to have changed in the Navy. But it was the same back home."

Albright, a Graham native who is a founding editor of *North Carolina Literary Review*, has provided us with a valuable insight into the history of the state's social evolution. His comprehensive study of the forgotten B-1 band places in perspective North Carolina's current social and legislative struggle to overcome the vestiges of racism.

The Forgotten First: B1 and the Integration of the Modern Navy is available on Nook and Lulu and in hardcopy online at www.rafountain.com/navy or by writing R.A. Fountain, P.O. Box 44, Fountain, N.C. 27829.

Stephen E. Smith's most recent book of poems is A Short Report on the Fire at Woolworths. *He can be reached at travisses@hotmail.com.*



Harley
& ASSOCIATES
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE, INC.

- Commercial & Industrial
- Sales & Leasing
- Tenant Representation
- Property Management
- Site Selection
- Consulting
- Landlord Representation

398 Carl Street, Suite 101 Wilmington, NC 28403 | 910.784.9800 | 877.790.9401 | Fax 910.784.9111
www.harleyassociates.com

CRAIGE & FOX PLLC
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW

LAWRENCE S. CRAIGE
Elder Law, Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Guardianship
Board Certified Specialist in Elder Law
Certified Elder Law Attorney

CHARLOTTE NOEL FOX
Business Law, Civil Litigation, Municipal Law, Real Property

ASHLEY MICHAEL
Family Law, Adoptions, Surrogacy
Certified Mediator-Family Financial Collaborative Law Trained Professional

BONNIE MANGUM BRAUDWAY
Homeowner Association Law, Debt Collection, Real Property

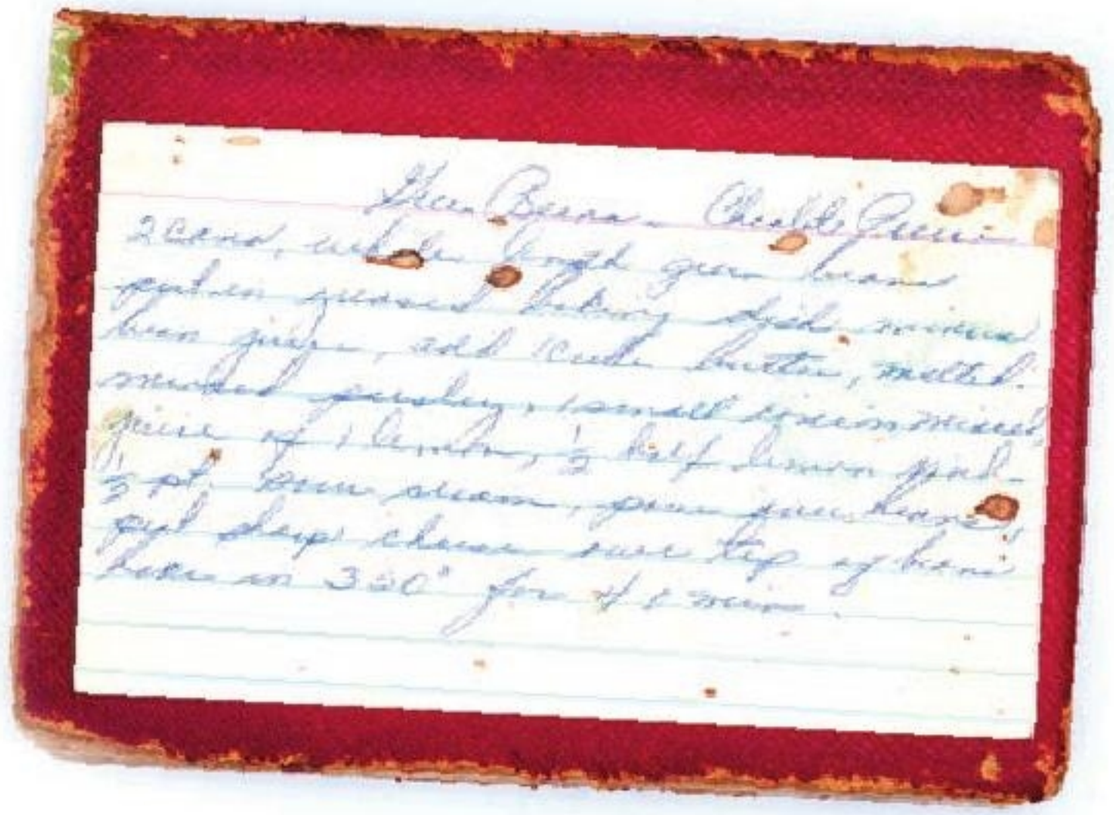
701 MARKET STREET • WILMINGTON, NC 28401
910-815-0085 PHONE • 910-815-1095 FAX
www.craigeandfox.com

A gift that's sure
to make an impression.
When you purchase tickets to the 2014 U.S. Open Championships, you'll receive a
*FREE holiday gift from the USGA. It's just our way of saying Happy Holidays!
www.usopen.com
June 9–22, 2014
*Offer good November 8 – December 31, 2013 or while supplies last.
U.S. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2014 PINEHURST No. 2
USGA

Create Your Own
Postcard Holiday
Visit the Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area during the holiday season this year. With low rates for holiday lodging, you can create a new holiday tradition from now through New Year's. Holly trees, camellias and evergreen pine trees line pathways and village streets providing a postcard perfect image of a winter scene in North Carolina.
Visit www.homeofgolf.com to find the special holiday rates you've been waiting for.
PINE NEEDLES LODGE & GOLF CLUB
800.747.7272
pineneedles-midpines.com
DEERCROFT GOLF CLUB
910.369.3107
deercroft.com
PINEHURST SOUTHERN PINES ABERDEEN AREA
Home of American Golf
800.346.5362
HomeOfGolf.Com
Scan here to go to the Convention & Visitor Bureau's website.

Recipe for Trouble

Sharing a holiday recipe was never so hard



By Ann Ipock

Here in the South, our recipe cards are almost as valuable as our business cards. And even more valuable to a classy Southern belle is her social "calling" card, which every girl worth her weight in diamonds ought to have in her possession at all times. My card, for example, is a cream-on-cream vellum fold-over note, measuring roughly three inches square, with my initials embossed, and a matching envelope. I keep several of them in my purse, as well as the glove compartment of my car, ready to attach to the dish that I've brought for a sick neighbor or a grieving friend. It can also do in a pinch if you forget to buy a birthday card or a shower gift card.

With Christmas just around the corner, I go into high-gear, gathering recipes for jellies and relishes, sweets and holiday meals. Years ago I made my own miniature cookbook featuring a couple of dozen recipes for the Christmas season, which I whip out every year before the holiday begins and start cooking. Then I attach a card with the name of each treat for my guests, or if I'm going to a dinner club or a potluck, I'll attach the printed recipe card.

That said, I recently shared a new holiday recipe with my tree-hugging, thirty-natural-supplements-a-day, holistic — and, frankly, unrealistic — friend. Though she loved the idea of a broccoli dish — something green and glorious to go with her organic, grass-fed, free-range, sung-a-lullaby-to-it-every-night turkey — she abhorred the other ingredients. We were having appetizers (gluten-free cheese straws) and wine (organic) recently when I described this fantastic dish that Robin, a friend from Charleston, had prepared in her home.

I began reciting the ingredients, starting off with the aforementioned cruciferous, high in beta-carotene broccoli, which brought a smile to Rhonda's face. Next, I said cream of shrimp soup.

"Processed?" she asked warily.

I couldn't tell if this was a statement or a question. And me being me, said, "Uhm, do you mean you've *processed* what I've said so far?" Shoot! Y'all, sometimes she acts like a robot: She can be stiff, stern and way too controlled. Still, she is my friend after all — the poor thing — so I tried to be patient. Next I told her cream cheese. Uh-oh! She explained that she's "severely lactose intolerant." I was beginning to feel intolerant toward her. I continued reciting the ingredients: four slices of American cheese. Raising an eyebrow, she said, "You know that's not really cheese." I pictured a factory of fake people (robots, actually) spinning a cylinder of orange goo around till it firmed up, then a slicer/stacker taking over, perfecting sixteen bright orange slices of faux cheese wrapped in cellophane. I continued, "a stick of butt —" I stopped at "butt" because I remembered the severely lactose intolerance thing, so butter was out. "Well, obviously, you can't eat this, so I won't tell you the rest," I said to her, sounding somewhat huffy. I was a little put out at that point.

I opened my purse to drop the recipe back inside. Oh no, she was either having fun with this — was she actually *trying* to annoy me? — or her controlling (did I mention OCD?) personality wanted me to finish what I'd started, even if she couldn't eat it. Exhausted, I muttered, "three-fourths cup Italian bread crumbs." "Oh, hell!" she remarked as I jumped a mile, startled, "That's one thing I can eat! I make my own spelt bread, you know?" I stared straight ahead, choking back a little wine and dabbing my nose where a tiny bit had spewed out.

Remember not too long ago when you asked a friend for a recipe? You recited it back to her out loud or else she gave you a written copy and you simply said, "Thanks!" You might even ask, "Where do you find the best prices on imported cheese?" Wasn't it so much simpler then? Nowadays people are on cleanses, detoxifications, fastings and allergy-free diets.

I say if you can't share a recipe without a science lesson in the middle of it or breaking the ingredients down into chemistry particles, it just ain't worth eating! Now please excuse me while I go prepare some decadent espresso ganache brownies, which have six sinful ingredients that Rhonda may avoid, but I sure as heck won't. Let me know if you want the recipe. I'll give you my card.

Ann Ipock is an award-winning Southern author, humorist and speaker whose books include the Life is Short *series. She may be reached at amipock@ec.rr.com.*

CSH
CRANFILL SUMNER & HARTZOG LLP

A new level of family law representation from NC's leading statewide law firm.

Family Law - Wilmington

Colleen Shea
Partner
cshea@cshlaw.com
910.777.6014

Emily Goodman
Associate
egoodman@cshlaw.com
910.777.6015

PRACTICE AREAS

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Appellate Law
- Business Law
- Construction Law
- Commercial Litigation
- Criminal Defense
- Education Law
- Employment Law
- Family Law
- Insurance Law
- Intellectual Property
- Land Condemnation & Eminent Domain
- Medical Malpractice
- Municipality Law
- Professional Liability
- Trucking & Transportation
- Workers' Compensation

RALEIGH 919.828.5100
CHARLOTTE 704.332.8300
WILMINGTON 910.777.6000

@CSHLaw | www.cshlaw.com

Every Retirement Starts
With a Blank Canvas...

PATHFINDER
WEALTH CONSULTING
Guiding You Forward

910.793.0616 • PathfinderWC.com
4018 Oleander Dr. Ste 2, Wilmington, NC 28403

Rob Penn, CFP®
Jason Wheeler, CFP®

Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network, member FINRA/SIPC, a registered investment adviser.

'Nog

However it evolved, eggnog is the taste of Christmas tradition

By Frank Daniels III

There are some drinks that are so good, and that generate so many specific memories, that you can only serve them once a year.

For us, it is eggnog. As you will see, preparing eggnog is a production, and in our house it takes three generations to get it right and on the table.

Like most alcoholic drinks, the origin and history of eggnog is mostly lore and hearsay. Originally the tavern punch was fortified by wine, and the name may be derived from the type of cup the egg mixture was served in, a noggin, a small wooden cup as fresh eggs and milk would have been expensive ingredients and servings would have been much smaller than the traditional servings in tankards. The drink evolved in complexity when tavern owners beefed up their punches by adding brandy to the mix. The name could also have been derived from the American adaptation of the punch that substituted rum (or "grog") for the wine. Rum was plentiful in America because of the tripartite trade, eggs and milk were more affordable here as well, and "egg and grog" or "egg 'n' grog" became a popular wintertime drink.

However the name originated, we're happy that revelers continued to experiment and refine their punches, and that eggnog became a holiday tradition for many families.

For us, the eggnog tradition has been handed down, tweaked and thoroughly tested by our family for over 70 years. The recipe, as family lore goes, was originally adapted by my grandfather from the Four Roses Kentucky Bourbon eggnog recipe that he cut out of a magazine, but this version has been altered over the years to suit our tastes.

Four Roses is one of the oldest bourbon brands, and from the 1930s to the 1950s was probably the best-selling bourbon. It was my grandfather's bourbon of choice until the Seagram Company, the Canadian distilling company who had acquired the brand in 1943, decided to limit the sale of Four Roses to the European and Asian markets, where it became extremely popular for years.

The Four Roses brand did not return to the United States until 2002 when a Japanese brewery company, Kirin, acquired the rights to the brand and opened a new distillery in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. They have brought back the original yellow label Four Roses and added higher quality small batch and single barrel bottles that are among some of Kentucky's best bourbons.

So the most recent adaptation of our eggnog recipe was the re-introduction of Four Roses to the punch. I love that this punch can return to the roots my grandfather started. I also am amused by the small irony that it was a Canadian company that took it away (eastern Canadian, not the wonderful folks from western Canada like my wife and her family), and also that it took a Japanese company to bring it back, as I was made in Japan.

My sister, who works out religiously and is always in great shape, apparently thought our punch needed more calories, so she added the touch of dropping in a half-gallon of vanilla ice cream to the bowl. "It keeps the eggnog cold," was her rationalization. It was a brilliant idea and has become an essential piece of our traditional punch.

Also serving the punch in Jefferson cups is part of our tradition. We never pull them out except for Christmas morning for the eggnog (at least until recently when we began experimenting with another classic punch, Fish House Punch, but that is another story).

Enjoy.

Eggnog

The heft of this punch disguises its power, so be careful of the steps!

1 dozen eggs
3/4 cup fine sugar
3 pints half and half
1 pint Four Roses Kentucky Straight Bourbon
1 pint cognac
1/2 cup dark rum
1/2 gallon natural vanilla ice cream
Whole nutmeg

Separate yolks and whites of the 12 eggs. Add 1/2 cup of the sugar to yolks while beating until very thick. Add 1/4 cup remaining sugar to whites while beating and beat until very stiff. Mix the egg whites well with yolks.

Transfer the eggs into a large punch bowl. Stir in half and half. Add Four Roses, cognac and rum. Stir thoroughly. Add 1/2 gallon of high quality vanilla ice cream. Serve cold in chilled julep, Jefferson cups or chilled glass of your choice. Grate nutmeg over surface.

Frank Daniels III is an editor and writer living in Nashville, Tennessee, who frequently visits Wilmington. His cocktail book is Frank's Little Black Bar Book, *Wakestone Press. Contact him at fdanielsiii@mac.com.*

How to Make a Bomb

(And other tales from the CAM Café)

By Dana Sachs

The Chickpea Falafel Bomb at Cameron Art Museum's CAM Café requires you to do some arranging — though not downright cooking — at the table. Warm pita pockets arrive accompanied by fresh greens, tomato and red onion, sliced radish, feta cheese, homemade tahini, a cucumber-yogurt salad known as *tzatziki*, and, of course, the "bombs" of falafel, which are crispy balls of ground chickpea, quinoa, flax seeds and spices. My lunch companion, Paul Phillips, and I had to suspend our conversation in order to concentrate on arranging these various ingredients inside the bread.

It's a somewhat awkward maneuver, filling a pita, something like building a salad while holding the bowl in your hand. Paul's was pretty, I'll give him that. Leaves of lettuce peeked over the half-moon of bread. After a moment of contemplation, he raised it to his mouth and took a bite.

"What do you think?" I asked. On these assignments, my lunch date is also my fellow food-critic, so I needed his opinion.

"Well, so far so good," he said. He managed to point a free finger toward a couple of stray falafel patties that remained on the platter between us. "And I haven't even gotten to that stuff yet."

Paul is 86 years old, slight but quick and lively, with an accent that screams "North Carolina native." He is also a U.S. Navy veteran who spent 41 years as an ammunitions and ordnance specialist. In 2002, not long after he retired, the Cameron hired him to join its security team. He's been there ever since.

When I hear "Museum Security" my mind goes to art heists, but the Cameron has been caper-free since it opened. For the most part, the security staff plays a more suggestive role. "I make sure nobody touches the art," Paul explained. Apparently, some people can't resist. The exhibits on display over the past few months, in fact, offer serious temptations. One, an installation by the Canadian artist Diane Landry, uses recycled materials like water bottles and umbrellas to create extraordinary moving sculptures (it's open until January and you have to see it to believe it). The other, which, sadly, will have closed by the time you read this magazine, was a beyond-fabulous feather-and-bead-festooned display of Mardi Gras Indian costumes that designer Alonzo V. Wilson created for the HBO show *Treme*. People walking through the museum this year have found it an exercise in fortitude to keep their fingers off the bottles and out of the feathers. "It's mostly old ladies," Paul told me. "They like to touch things."

You might call Paul overqualified for this job. He spent twenty-one years, from 1945 to 1966, in the Navy, based on aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers. He spent another twenty years working in the civil service at the U.S. Army's Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, near Southport, loading ships with ammunition. You know the guy who disarms a bomb that's accidentally fallen off a plane as it's landing on an aircraft carrier? That was Paul. And you know the one

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

who dives under water to clear unexploded ordnance? That was him, too.

He also witnessed the world at some awful moments: post-Hiroshima Japan; China in 1949, just as it fell to the Communists and his ship "took all the Americans we could find to Hong Kong"; Ethiopia when it was wracked by devastating famine. In China, starvation had reached such harrowing proportions that "the wagons would go around every morning to pick up the bodies of people that died overnight." In other words, he's seen the world, but he didn't see a lot of tourist spots. Even Italy was rough when he visited back in the 1950s. In Naples, he said, the crime was so bad that "they'd jerk your watch right off your arm."

In 1945, when Paul was a 17-year-old new recruit, he was assigned to the Battleship *North Carolina*, which had to sail from the Pacific through the Panama Canal to Bayonne, New Jersey, where it was about to be retired. Because it was his first tour of duty, the ship seemed huge to him, and he was afraid of getting lost in the maze of corridors and compartments below deck. "When I saw where I was going to be sleeping," Paul told me, "I was afraid to leave that place because I didn't think I could find my bed again."

In the Navy at that time, sailors subsisted mostly on packaged food that could last at sea for months. Powdered milk and powdered eggs were staples, and bad weather would make things even worse. When storms came up aboard a destroyer, for example, the crew barely ate anything because the seas were too rough for cooking. The Battleship *North Carolina*, though, was a whole different story. Wilmington residents might be pleased to know that food on the battleship, according to Paul, was "pretty good." Its large size allowed for an on-board bakery, which meant a lot to a boy with a sweet tooth.

Because so many of Paul's tours involved stops at places that were distressed or in crisis, his Navy years never afforded him much opportunity to sample local cuisine. That's unfortunate because he's an intrepid eater. During our meal at the CAM Café, we toured the world. Our Chickpea Falafel Bomb gave us a taste of the Middle East. We sampled the flavors of Latin America with the Blackened Fish Tacos ("too spicy" for Paul, but perfect for me). The Tomato Bisque had a French creaminess and a goat cheese tang that gave it depth, while the She Crab Soup returned us to the Carolina coast with some splashes of sherry and white wine that added Continental sophistication. The menu, which changes seasonally, can take you to Asia as well, offering, on the day we visited, a Vietnamese Banh Mi sandwich. There was also a Pretzel Burger and a B.L.T., for those who prefer tastes that come from closer to home. "A lot of people eat here," Paul said of the restaurant, which opened under new management in recent months, "and I've never heard any complaints."

At 86, Paul Phillips no longer needs to work, and he conceded that people often ask him why he doesn't just retire and stay home. "There's too much work to do at home," he'll tell them. "I get my rest right here."

We finished off our meal by sharing a piece of coconut cake about the size of the battleship. The CAM Café gets its desserts from a local bakery called Aunt Cake's Cookies. I agree with Paul, who said, "That lady makes a good cake."

About that time, Anne Brennan, the Cameron Art Museum's executive director, stopped by our table to say hello to her favorite security guard. Out in the museum garden, she told me, they'd recently planted a grove of fruit trees that they named Paul's Place in his honor. The trees — pear, peach, fig and plum, as well as blueberry bushes and a muscadine grape arbor — stand as the museum staff's response to the advice that Paul has shared over the years about how to stay fit and healthy.

"What's the key to eternal life, Paul?" Anne asked.

"Eating fruit," he told her. He was taking a hefty bite of coconut cake at that moment. But, still, he looked immortal.

CAM Café is open Tuesday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. They also serve brunch on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and dinner on Thursday nights from 5–9 p.m. For more information on the Cameron Art Museum and CAM Café, visit cameronartmuseum.com.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*

Bed Stu

Big Star

Civil Society

French Connection

Original Penguin

WeSC

Local Brands
+ much more!

bloke.
men's apparel

1427 Military Cutoff Rd.
Wilmington, NC 28403
910.679.4137
www.BlokeApparel.com

Happy Holidays!
palm garden
A Lilly Pulitzer® Signature Store
Mayfaire Town Center
6804 Main Street • Wilmington, NC • 910.256.9984
www.shoppalmgarden.com

920 Inspiration Drive
Wilmington, NC 28405
Mayfaire Town Center
910.256.0213
www.vandavisaveda.com

van davis AVEDA salon and spa

Brighten your Home
for the Holidays

BES BUTLER'S ELECTRIC SUPPLY

Over 2000 fixtures
on Display

2013 Castle Street
Wilmington, NC
(910) 762-3345

ButlerLightingSale.com

Sleigh Bells and Spanish Moss

The disputed origins of Christmas' most famous song

By Nan Graham

Unbelievable that a Christmas song could afford yet another opportunity to get out the sabers and duke it out between North and South? And that this song, possibly the most famous Christmas song in existence, was *not* written for Christmas? "One Horse Open Sleigh," later known as "Jingle Bells," was published in 1857 after a performance for a church Thanksgiving service. Yes . . . Thanksgiving!

The merry song later re-titled "Jingle Bells" was written by a young organist with a decidedly checkered past, James Pierpont. Born in Boston, he spent his childhood in Medford, Massachusetts, also home of cookbook matriarch Fannie Farmer and politician Michael Bloomberg, mayor of New York City.

New England did not suit young James, who ran away to sea at age 14, sailed the Pacific on a whaling ship called *The Shark*, then wandered back to Medford several years later, married a local girl and had two children. He then raced off to join the 1849 California gold rush, leaving his young wife, Millicent Cowee Pierpont, and two little ones to live with his father, the Unitarian minister in Medford.

Impetuous James stayed in California for two years working as a photographer before returning East. Not to his wife in Massachusetts, but to Savannah, Georgia, to be the organist and music director at the Unitarian Church where his brother was minister. The abandoned wife and children hung out with her father-in-law in Medford until she died three years later of tuberculosis. James did not return to Medford for her funeral . . . or to pick up his children. Even his infamous nephew, J.P. Morgan, tycoon and robber baron, called James "good for nothing." Of course, we're all already thinking it.

Meanwhile, in Savannah, the musical Mr. Pierpont published several songs with racy titles, including "Ring the Bell, Fanny" and "Wait, Lady, Wait," as well as "Oh! Let Me Not Neglected Die." Within the year of becoming a widower, James married the mayor of Savannah's daughter. "In a VERY short while" . . . those are the historian's words, not mine, "he and his bride had a baby girl." Two other children followed in this second family. James Pierpont had a "notorious reputation," proclaimed the mayor of Medford. "He was a bit of a rogue!" he said in a burst of understatement.

The abolitionist leanings of the pastor brother brought on the firing of both brothers, and the reverend returned to New England. But rascally James stayed in Savannah and at the onset of the Civil War, joined the Fifth Georgia Cavalry, where he worked as company clerk and wrote rousing Confederate music. Their catchy titles, "Our Battle Flag," "We Conquer or Die" and "Strike for the South" were among his popular but mediocre songs. His long-suffering father became chaplain for the Union Army.

Today, "Jingle Bells" remains one of the most popular and recognized songs in the world . . . and out of this world. In December 1965, aboard Gemini 6, NASA astronauts Wally Schirra and Tom Stafford whipped out harmonica and sleigh bells and rocked outer space with their rendition of "Jingle Bells." The first musical performance in space.

The argument over the birthplace of this "Christmas" song continues. Medford erected a plaque where the song is first said to be *played*, and Savannah erected a marker on the site of the demolished church where Georgians say the song was first *performed*. You say pea-cans, I say pea-cons.

Medford folk reject Savannah's claim as invalid because snow is a rare Southern commodity and there is no mention of Spanish moss in the jolly song.

But Savannah remembers that William Wordsworth was quite clear that poetry is "emotion recollected in tranquility." In a letter to his mother, 12-year-old James writes of the rollicking winter rides in Medford. As an adult in the steamy Georgia Lowcountry, Pierpont must have had vivid memories of the thrilling sleigh races through the snowy Medford town square where every hormone-driven young man loved the thrill of a fast, lurching ride with a squealing pretty-young-thing seated beside him. Actually, nothing has changed much on that front.

And finally, Medford, we all know that memory is the most powerful of human sensations . . . flooding us with happy days from (simple times) long ago. No matter where we are at the moment.

A short version of this column was broadcast on WHQR on December 18, 2008.

Nan Graham is a true Southerner and the literary doyenne of the Cape Fear. A shortened version of her Louisa May Alcott piece aired on WHRQ in May 2013.

Love how you look ~ Look how you feel

ec02 is a revolutionary, fractional laser treatment designed to renew the skin's surface, giving you a radiant, youthful glow and a feeling of renewed confidence.

- Reduce Acne Scars
- Immediately Improve Texture and Skin Irregularities
- Erase Fine Lines and Wrinkles
- Tightens and Brightens Skin

Call today For your Complimentary Consultation!

glo MEDSPA

(910) 256-2690
www.glomedspa.com

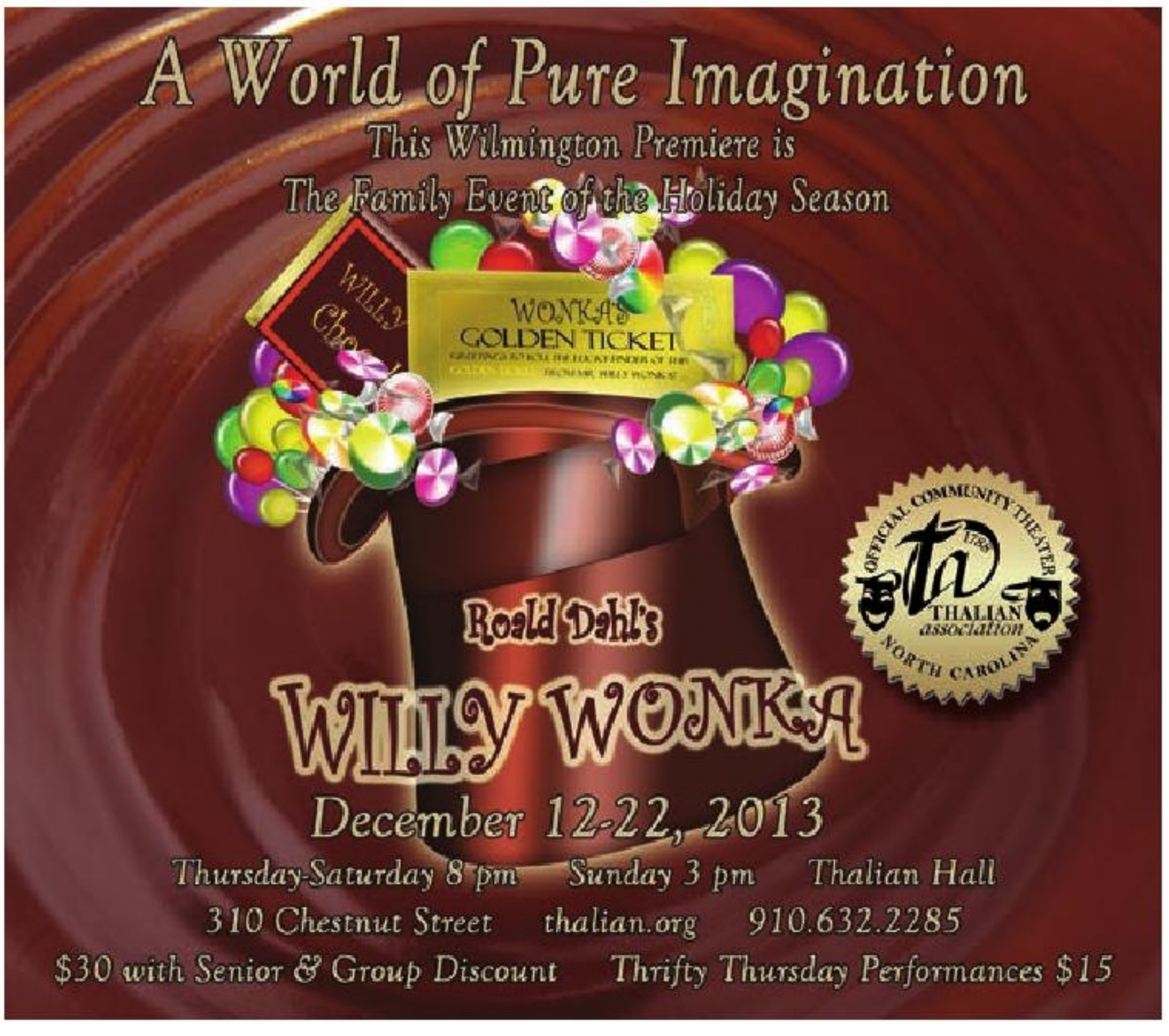
"Life-transforming ideas have always come to me through books."
-bell hooks

Pomegranate Books

Resources for a Fruitful Life

A carefully curated collection of literary and life enhancing titles for all ages, featuring locally made card and gift items.

4418 Park Ave
Wilmington NC 28403
910.452.1107
www.pombooks.net


A World of Pure Imagination
This Wilmington Premiere is
The Family Event of the Holiday Season
WONKA'S GOLDEN TICKET
Roald Dahl's
WILLY WONKA
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY THEATER
THALIAN association
NORTH CAROLINA
December 12-22, 2013
Thursday-Saturday 8 pm Sunday 3 pm Thalian Hall
310 Chestnut Street thalian.org 910.632.2285
$30 with Senior & Group Discount Thrifty Thursday Performances $15

Downtown After Dark

It's cold and raw. And often, beautiful

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Jason Frye

This time of year, night comes early. Like Carl Sandburg's fog, it creeps up on us a minute at a time until it's here, it's 5:30 p.m. and firmly nighttime. Perched on a barstool at Manna or in the window of Port City Java, you have the perfect vantage point to watch the streets dim and fade until the streetlights' orange glow creeps in to fit itself into every corner, leaving only the most secret places still dark.

The Riverwalk? This time of year, you can have it to yourself. The wind off the water cuts through coat and sweater, driving off some with the chill, driving others together.

The lovers, out for a walk, stand against the railing in a cone of streetlamp light, mesmerized by the wide ribbon of black satin that is the Cape Fear River. The one behind stands arms wrapped around the other, hands tucked into the pockets of the other's coat. Fingers interlaced, arms entwined, their breath plumes in unison. They murmur to each other, laugh, stand there oblivious to the cold and dark. For them, it's spring and all is warm and right.

Take, too, the indigents. Huddled at the foot of Market Street in what little shelter the information booth provides, they sit, wrapped in layers of worn-out pants and jackets, chins buried down to their necks, heads capped in thick knit hats. They sit together, smoking, talking, wishing for spring.

Nighttime and the cold here is enough to announce winter without the actual inconvenience of snow. Just cold. But here on the coast, it's enough. Our blood has grown thin, almost reptilian, and to keep warm we need summer sun or the heat of another's presence.

While the winter streets aren't as lively as their summertime cousins', the strains of blues guitar still carry. In fact, they carry farther without the humidity to thicken the air. Now, the winter notes, the sharp, high ones, shatter, splinter and shred like an icicle fallen from a great height. The low notes thrum through and warm the chest the same as a swallow of good bourbon. Igniting as it goes, loosing something within you that slows your steps to match the music's time, waking you up to the world around you.

The music, this endless blues jam, is ever present, livening springtime streets the same as winter ones, but other sounds play on an endless loop too. The din of smokers standing outside, warming themselves by breathing fire. The incessant grind and flick of the lighter and the whoosh of exhalation play rhythm to the conversation's lead. The plodding clop of mounted police or the high clicking of gears and chain from their bicycle counterparts. The growl of a hot rod at a stop sign, rattling chests and windows with its rumbling engine. Music from a bar, a restaurant, a busker, the blues jammer. A patchwork quilt of sound.

There's a haunting charm of the wintertime downtown after dark. The live oaks still wear heavy coats of leaves and shield the streets of the Historic District from the brunt of the wind. On candlelight tours of these streets and homes, when the witch-hazel's yellow and red anemone-like flowers are lit by candle and lantern, you forget the bare branches and think *flowers* and *spring*. Then, like our lovers on the Riverwalk, you forget the cold and dark, and live inside the moment.

We're funny like that. We need to see the contrast of witch-hazel to be reminded of winter's stark beauty here along the coast in the same way we need to see the pastel pop of azaleas against the incessant green of springtime to be reminded that the world has moved on. But it's winter now, and dark early. On still nights, the river reflects streetlamps, headlights, and the twin red comets of taillights as they speed across the bridge, making a sort of Milky Way of terrestrial stars spread out at Wilmington's feet. On the darkest nights, and the coldest, the stars overhead seem to press closer, and for all their millions of degrees, don't warm us, that's our job. And so we retreat inside the nearest lively pub, warmed by open lit hearth and laughter, to shrug off our jackets and fold them over our barstools and think about spring.

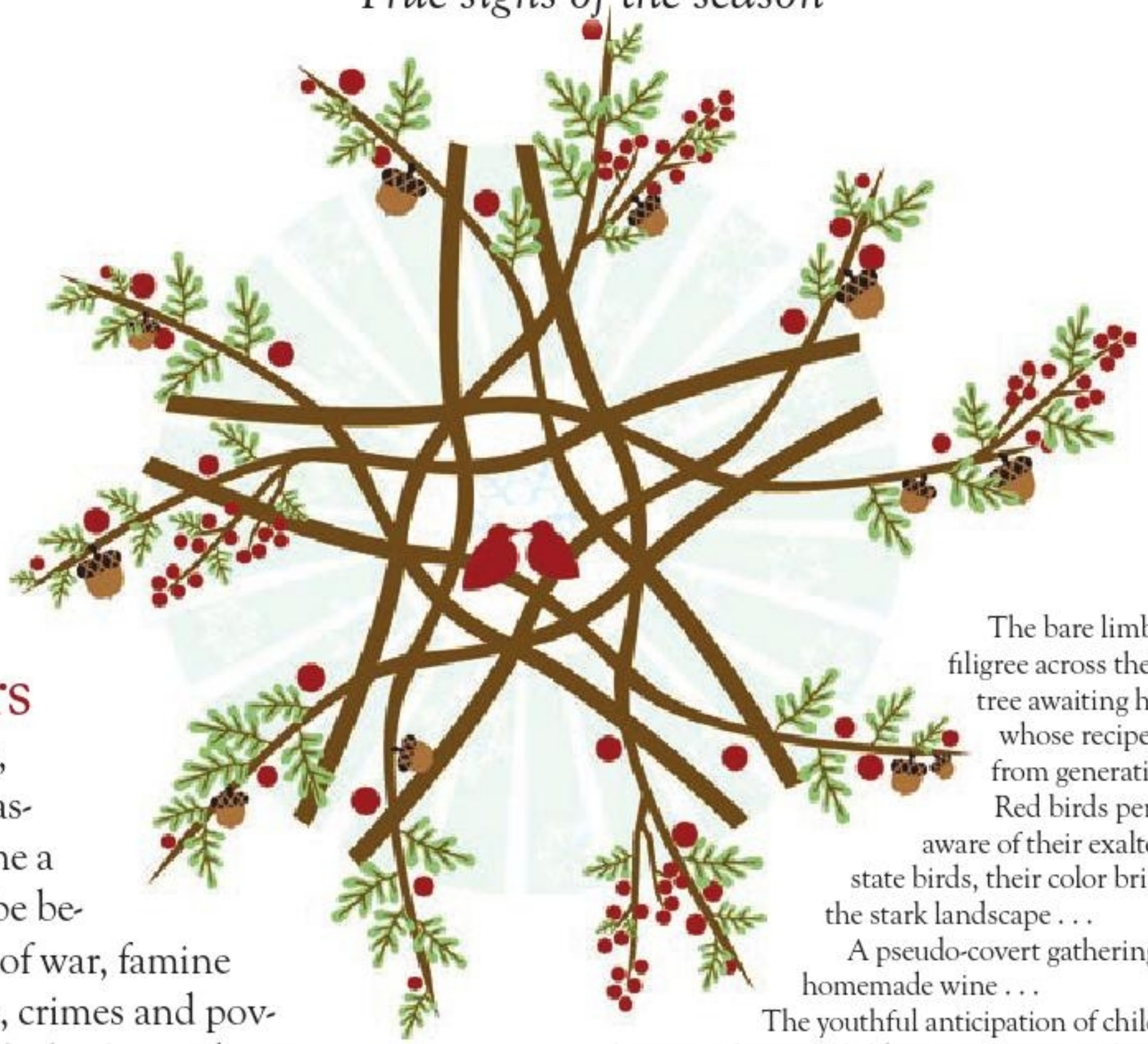
Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of two forthcoming travel guides. He's a barbecue judge, outdoor enthusiast, poet, and lover of all things North Carolina.

Merry Christmas
from Polka Dot Palm
polka dot palm
unique gifts. chic accessories. coastal decor.
8262 Market Street
910.319.7400 • 10am - 6pm
*Next to the Harris Teeter in Porter's Neck
Find us on Facebook!
CUSTOM, ONE OF A KIND WREATHS
THAT WILL LAST
MADE FROM LOCALLY HARVESTED
MATERIALS FRESH DAILY
PRE-ORDER OR MADE ON THE SPOT
DEEPLY ROOTED GARDENS
6209 CAROLINA BEACH RD.
WILMINGTON, NC
910.399.8035

BUD LIGHT
SMOOTH & REFRESHING
12 FL. OZ. • BEER
A-B, ST. LOUIS, MO
CELEBRATE RESPONSIBLY
WHEN CHEERING ON YOUR TEAM TO VICTORY, HELP MAKE THE GOOD TIMES GREAT AND CELEBRATE RESPONSIBLY.
HERE WE GO
FOR MORE DETAILS, FIND US ON FACEBOOK.
ENJOY RESPONSIBLY
©2011 Anheuser-Busch, Inc., Bud Light® Beer, St. Louis, MO

A Lesson From Scrooge

True signs of the season



By Bill Thompson

Several years ago I discovered that, right about Christmastime, I tend to become a little cynical. It may be because of all the news of war, famine and natural disasters, crimes and poverty, and our general lack of consideration for each other. Or it may be because I think that the season ought to be more civil, more about the spirit of Christmas, the Christ Child, peace on Earth and good will toward men (not just "men of good will").

So to ward off that cynicism I remember the most antithetical Christmas character: Ebenezer Scrooge. Nineteenth-century London is a long way from North Carolina, but the view of the season is still the same. I remember what it took for Old Scrooge to see the good in the season, too. And so, to prevent my becoming another Scrooge, I take a voluntary look at the spirit of Christmases past, present and future and, fortunately, am comforted by my vision.

When I see the spirit of Christmas, I see:

Package-laden cars driving past shorn fields of cotton, tobacco, corn and soybeans . . .

Houses with the doors and porches framed with strands of all-blue Christmas lights, creating the illusion of an ice-covered landscape far removed from the temperate Carolina winter . . .

Deer hunters lining the sides of country roads as they look anxiously toward the woods and fields, their guns poised. They are modern huntsmen carrying on a tradition that began as a need to provide food for the winter tables . . .

The bare limbs of pecan trees forming a filigree across the winter sky, the fruit of the tree awaiting harvest and inclusion in pies whose recipes have been handed down from generation to generation . . .

Red birds perched on porch railings, unaware of their exalted status as cardinals, official state birds, their color bringing a seasonal contrast to the stark landscape . . .

A pseudo-covert gathering of old friends to share some homemade wine . . .

The youthful anticipation of children, watched by older folks hoping to become children once more, wishing for that which adulthood and time have worn away . . .

Music coming from churches as choirs rehearse for the Christmas cantata, their untrained voices making beautiful music sung from the heart . . .

The smell of the kitchen in its preparation of oyster dressing and ambrosia, tasty culinary treats savored once a year . . .

Wood fires burning in fireplaces, drawing families together; wood fires blazing from a steel barrel, warming the nights for a turkey shoot . . .

Old friends gathering at oyster roasts, or more sedate parties with eggnog and "finger foods" . . .

Stockings filled with fruit, candy and nuts along with a small toy, all hung by the chimney late on Christmas Eve . . .

The expectation of families sitting in a circle around the room as they take turns opening presents to the accompaniment of *oohs* and *aahs* and *just what I wanted* . . .

An unspoken wish for snow on Christmas Day. . .

. . . and somewhere above it all, through the noise and the revelry, the sounds of "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" and "O Holy Night" reminding us of what the season is all about.

That's what I choose to think about as Christmas approaches. That's the way it used to be, the way it mostly is this year, and the way I hope it will be next year.

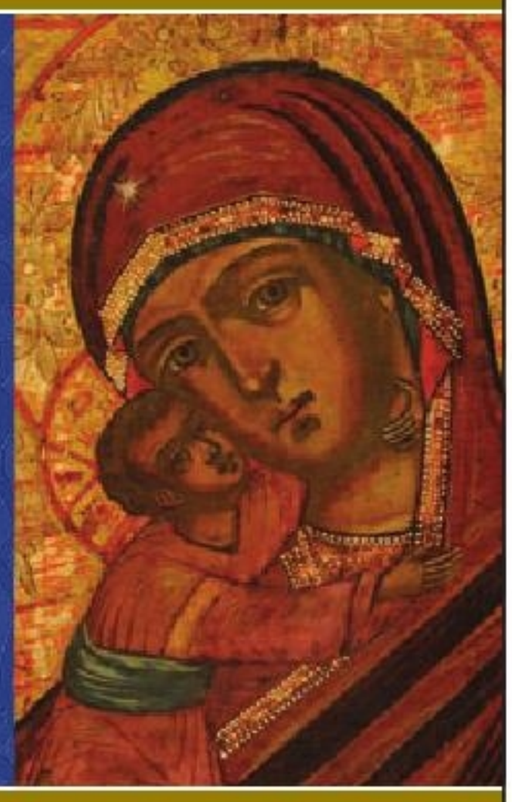
Bill Thompson is a speaker and author who lives just down the road, in nearby Hallsboro.

THROUGH MARCH 5, 2014 AT THE
NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF HISTORY

THE TSARS' CABINET

A RARE GLIMPSE INTO THE SPLENDOR OF
IMPERIAL RUSSIA
IN TWO MAGNIFICENT EXHIBITIONS!

WINDOWS *into* HEAVEN



The Tsars' Cabinet showcases more than 230 porcelain and decorative objects that exemplify the craftsmanship of artisans under the Romanov tsars.

Windows into Heaven highlights 36 icons of the 18th and 19th centuries from the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Tsars' Cabinet is organized by the Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary from the Kathleen Durdin Collection, in collaboration with International Arts & Artists.

One admission price for both exhibitions. Information at ncmuseumofhistory.org or 919-807-7900.

NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF HISTORY
History Happens Here
N.C. Department of Cultural Resources

North Carolina News Network

DUKE ENERGY.

newsobserver.com N&O

RAGLAND FAMILY FOUNDATION
MR. AND MRS. EVERETTE C. SHERRILL

Bring It Downtown

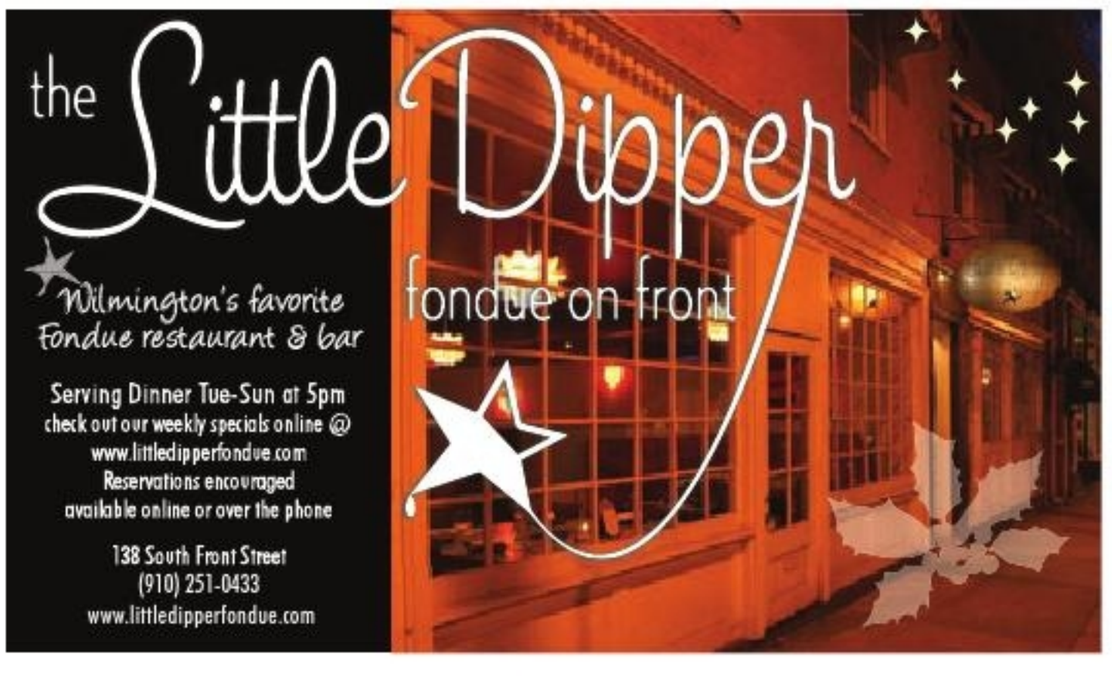
Occasions...Just Write

Shop local this year for unique holiday gifts. Come experience our diverse selection of:

- ✓ Fine writing instruments
- ✓ Stationery and journals
- ✓ Decorative glass
- ✓ Customized stationery
- ✓ Handmade paper
- ✓ Holiday cards and gift wrap

910.343.9033
313 N. Front Street
Inside the Cotton Exchange
email: occasionsjustwrite@gmail.com
www.occasionsjustwrite.com

find us on



Ring-Billed Gull

The adaptable coastal bird unaffected by human activity

By Susan Campbell

Come late

November and then through December, ring-billed gull numbers predictably swell, peaking sometime in January. Flocks can easily number in the hundreds, and are remarkably unaffected by human activity. Of course, our actions over the past century are what facilitated the species' winter range expansion in the first place.

Familiar to most residents of the coast, birdwatchers or not, the ring-billed gull is characterized by its white head and chest, gray back, and the black vertical band — or ring — around its bill. When perched, this medium-sized gull displays black wingtips with white spots that extend beyond its squared-off tail. The legs, like the tail, are bright yellow. Wintering adults exhibit gray-brown flecking on the head. Immature birds will have varying amounts of brownish streaking as well as pinkish legs and bill. It takes three years for an individual to acquire adult plumage.

Ring-billed gulls nest up north, on small islands across the Northern Tier and throughout much of Canada. They seek sparsely vegetated habitat and are often found sharing islands with other species of gull and tern. Ring-billeds are known to return to their natal area to breed, often nesting mere feet away from where they nested the year before. They are likely to return to familiar wintering grounds as well, and have a highly tuned sense of direction, using a built-in compass as well as landmarks (such as rivers and mountain ranges) to successfully navigate in spring and fall.

Population numbers for the species were significantly impacted by millinery trade, egg collectors and human encroachment by early settlers in the early 1900s. But with the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918, ring-billed gull numbers began to stabilize. No longer was it legal to shoot adults for their feathers or collect their eggs for food. Additionally, introduction of fish species such as the alewife and inundation of new habitat in the western Great Lakes region increased breeding productivity in the decades that followed.

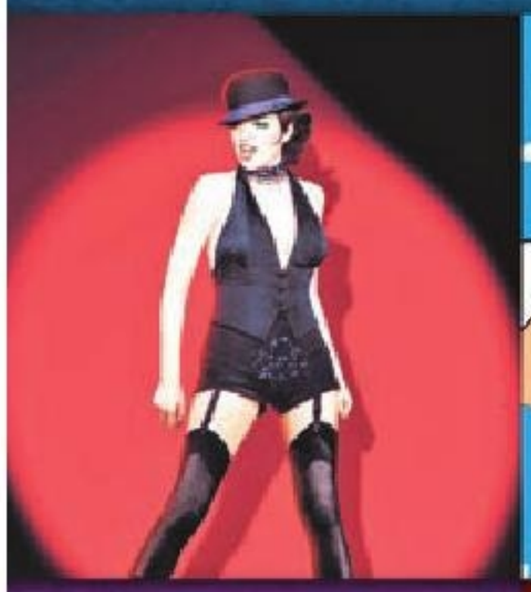
An increase in landfills, farmlands and reservoirs has created more foraging habitat for these birds. Although ring-billeds prefer insects, worms, fish, small rodents, and grains and berries, they are highly adaptable. As a result of food abundance, reproductive success has been even higher in the last thirty years — especially around the Great Lakes and the eastern United States. That said, this species has become something of a nuisance in some areas. Control measures (scarecrows, noise makers, materials that move in the wind) have been employed but with very little success.

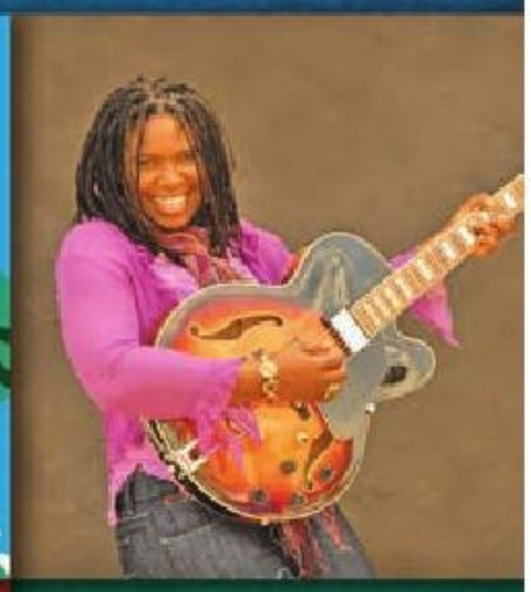
Large flocks of ring-billed gulls are likely to get the attention of birdwatchers come late winter. At that time of the year, with several thousand along the coast, the odds of finding a vagrant mixed in increase. It is possible to tease out a California gull or perhaps a black-headed gull from the hundreds sitting on the beach or a recently plowed field, if one has good optical equipment — and a lot of patience.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. Contact her by email at susan@ncaves.com, or by calling (910) 949-3207.

Thalian Hall
CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, INC

2013-2014 MAIN ATTRACTIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS





NEW YEAR'S EVE
GALA
PRESENTED WITH CITY STAGE
DECEMBER 31 AT 7PM
DRINKS • DINNER • DESSERT
FEATURING CABARET

BEANSTALK
A MOO-SICAL RETELLING OF
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
PIED PIPER THEATRE
JANUARY 19 AT 3PM
CO-PRESENTED WITH THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF WILMINGTON, INC.

Ruthie FOSTER
JANUARY 24 AT 8PM
GRAMMY-NOMINATED BLUES SINGER

Tickets: 910.632.2285 · 800.523.2820 · www.ThalianHall.org · 310 Chestnut St · Wilmington, NC 28401

MC O2
MEDICAL CENTER
RESPIRATORY & HOME CARE

Your ONE STOP SHOP for
Home Medical Equipment

Oxygen & Nebulizer
CPAP/BiPAP Equipment
Lift Chairs
Hospital Beds
Wheelchairs

908 S. 16th Street
Wilmington NC 28401
910.762.7007 • 800.300.7770

Bring out the Best
AND THE BRIGHTEST

The **CFA Scholars Program** provides multiple gifts ranging from $1000 - full tuition. Students in grades 6 -12 who demonstrate academic achievement, talent, leadership, and exemplary character are encouraged to apply.

Scholarship Exams
SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 9 am – 12 pm

Learn more at our PK3 – Grade 12 Open House January 7 at 8:15 am.

CAPE FEAR ACADEMY
910.791.0287 CAPEFEARACADEMY.ORG

Six Thirty
event specialists

Photo credit: Eric Bonesky

private dinner parties
special occasions • catered events
book now for the 2014 US Open

The Best... Hands Down

Bryan Chappell & Porsche Maher
910.264.5177
sixthirtyservices@gmail.com

The Ghost of Christmas Pudding

In place of the warm, gooey, perfect cannonball of traditional English holiday cheer, I'll have a piece of good old American apple pie, please

By Serena Kenyon Brown

"When we got here last Saturday night, we found that Mrs. Fields had not only garnished the rooms with flowers, but also with holly (with real red berries) and festoons of moss dependent from the looking-glasses and picture frames. She is one of the dearest little women in the world. The homely Christmas look of the place quite affected us. Yesterday we dined at her house, and there was a plum-pudding, brought on blazing, and not to be surpassed in any house in England."

From a letter by Charles Dickens to Georgina Hogarth, Boston, Sunday, December 22, 1867.

Mrs. Fields, author and influential wife of Dickens' friend and publisher, James T. Fields, deserves every compliment that Boz heaped upon her when he visited Boston. Dickens was giving readings of *A Christmas Carol* at the time, so it is likely she was familiar with the glorious descriptions of celebratory fare in the story, and she clearly understood the importance of the seasonal plum pudding to her English visitor. Nowadays plum pudding — there are no plums in the pudding in the modern sense; it's an archaic reference to raisins — is eaten almost exclusively at Christmas in the British Isles, hence we refer to it as Christmas pudding.

The excellent Mrs. Fields must have done her research very carefully when she was planning how to make Dickens feel at home during his American tour. If she were entertaining him today, nothing would change. In 21st century England, my mother still decorates the house with deep green foliage (with real red berries), and every year a plum pudding is brought on blazing, the theatrical piece de resistance of the Christmas feast.

I experience a feeling of mild panic at the thought of Christmas without a Christmas pudding. I adore it: a warm, gooey, rib-sticking cannonball of a treat served with a melting spoonful of brandy butter. It is the perfect ending to the traditional British Christmas dinner, which consists of roast turkey or goose, roast potatoes, Brussels sprouts, carrots, parsnips, chestnut and/or forcemeat stuffing, pigs in blankets, bread sauce, cranberry sauce and lots of gravy.

As Dickens' letter suggests, it is very important that the pudding be set alight. This is achieved by a good sloshing of brandy — a fair amount also goes into the pudding's initial ingredients. The blaze can be somewhat hazardous, decorated as the pud is with a sprig of holly on the top, but that only adds to the thrill of the occasion. Some say that the flames symbolize the passion, others that they ward off evil spirits. They certainly brighten up the foggy dark of a British late December day, and people can huddle round the glowing pudding to keep warm.

You may be wondering why I don't make one myself. Perhaps I will, though I could never equal my mother's Christmas cuisine. Also, it should be done before Advent begins, up to a year in advance, the generous quantities of alcohol acting as preservative. In accordance with tradition, everyone present takes a turn to stir the ingredients and make a wish. When the pudding is heated on Christmas Day, it will be stuffed with charms and five pence pieces to bring luck and wealth to the recipient for the forthcoming year.

Experience has taught me not to go looking for specific tastes of the homeland. It can be rather disconcerting. Thanks to my husband Paul's relentless quest for barbecue in the U.K., I now think I'm in south London whenever I smell hickory wood on a grill.

It's more rewarding to save up all those missed tastes and make a special occasion of them, to weave them into the culinary tapestry of migration. If one spends every meal trying to recreate dishes from thousands of miles away, one misses out on learning about the local specialties that are part of the fabric of one's new home. A brief survey of friends here has revealed a host of wonderful possibilities to look forward to on Christmas Day: cakes, tortes, fudge, cookies and pies of every variety, including, of course, that most American of all: apple pie.

What Dickens probably did not have at his lodgings, and nor did I until my arrival in North Carolina, were glow-in-the-dark reindeer. These are one of the principal reasons I get excited about spending the holidays Stateside. I love my reindeer. They were a gift from a former landlady, who could have had no idea what bounty she had bestowed upon a foreigner who had previously considered putting the cards and a bit of tinsel on the mantelpiece a good effort at Yuletide ornamentation. As the season approached it became apparent that Christmas here called for something more.

Technically they may not be reindeer. The doe hasn't got antlers. Her spare frame and limited markings make it difficult to tell whether she is of a type of reindeer that doesn't grow antlers, or whether she is a deer without the rein part. It matters not a jot to me. She and her fawn light up in the dark and they will almost undoubtedly constitute the centerpiece of our garden decoration — for which read the only ones that we will get around to. Those candescent cervids represent to me the brilliance, excitement and fun of the holidays in America. On Christmas Day, I might just saunter out after lunch and share a slice of apple pie with them.

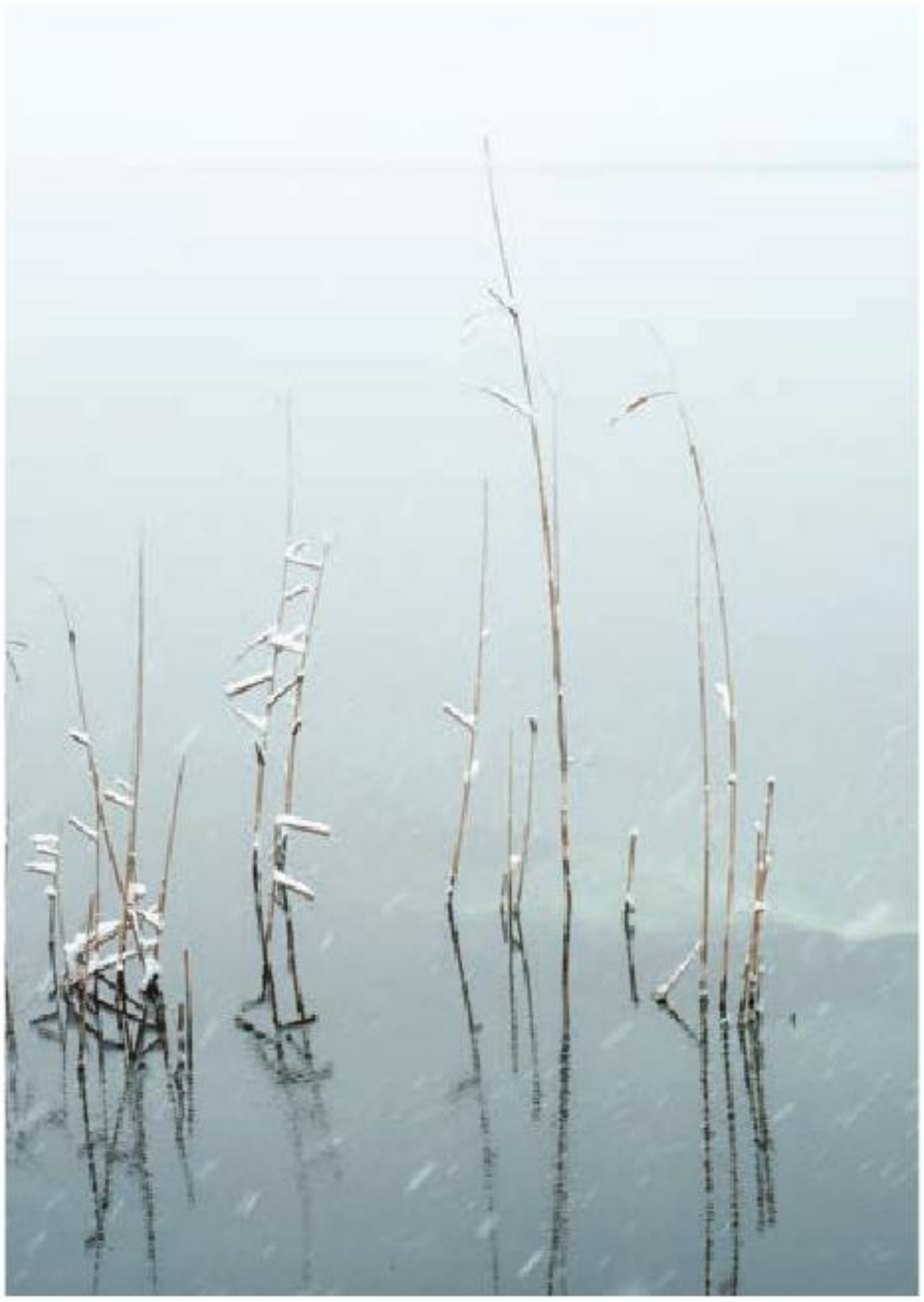
Serena Brown is the newest member of the Salt *staff.*

The Winter Storm

A surprise snowfall and a young retriever's first duck made for the perfect holiday memory

By Tom Bryant

It was going to snow! Early that morning when I stepped out the back door onto our patio, I could smell it in the air. The sky was slate gray. High cirrus clouds were moving slowly from the northwest. It was eerily quiet and the birds, unusually subdued, looked as if they were wearing down-filled coats with all their feathers puffed up to keep warm. Our birdbath was skimmed over with ice, and I broke it up with a stick and made a mental note to get warm water to refill it. Yes sir, I said to myself, it's gonna snow before lunch. I went back inside to confirm my prediction with TV's Channel 2 and Lee Kinard and his morning show.



In those days before cable TV, there were, at the most, maybe three channels available to TV watchers. We had an antenna fastened to our chimney with a rotor that would turn it in the direction of the station. Most of the time, we watched the Greensboro channel and tuned in to get the weather and news in the morning before heading out to work. I, along with my business partner, had a fledgling newspaper up and running. Linda, my bride, was teaching second grade. Tommy, our son, was in the first grade; so when something like a potential snowstorm was on the horizon, things around our household became a little jumpy.

"School has been canceled!" Linda exclaimed as I walked back into the kitchen.

Tommy was eating his breakfast, saying, "I want to build a snowman!" Immediately Linda's survival instinct kicked in. "We need to go to the grocery store for more supplies."

"OK," I replied. "You get ready, I'll take Tommy with me. We'll let Paddle out to run and then we'll go to the store." Paddle, my new yellow Lab, was just growing out of puppyhood and was raring to go. She romped around the backyard, then ran to the back of the Bronco wanting to load up and go play. "No girl, maybe later," I said as I put her back in her kennel. She whimpered, showing her disappointment.

Linda came out the back door. "Are you ready? The TV said snow should start falling before lunch."

"Let's ride before they sell all the milk," I replied. Linda laughed as we climbed in the Bronco and headed to Winn-Dixie. The place was packed with happy shoppers anticipating the winter storm. We loaded up with all kinds of goodies and drove home. "Perfect timing. We can put up the tree this afternoon." Christmas was two weeks away and we had been planning to decorate the tree over the weekend, but now with school canceled, we had an unanticipated extra day to play.

In short order, I brought the tree in from outside. We had bought it on Monday, a freshly cut Fraser fir, and it smelled great. I placed it in the stand in a corner away from the fireplace and went back outside to the stack of firewood for an armload for a fire later that afternoon.

The sky seemed to be getting darker with lower, angry-looking clouds moving across the horizon. Paddle started barking in her kennel. "No barking," I called, and she went back in her doghouse. It's a good thing I had bought more cedar bedding for her. She should be plenty comfy if it did snow. Maybe we'd go down to the duck hole after lunch.

The duck hole was what I had named a little creek where I hunted wood ducks and mallards during the season. The little stream proved to be very productive in the duck-hunting department and was a great place to train her as a little puppy. She had been with me several times before the season opened and retrieved dummies thrown across the creek, but she had yet to retrieve a duck. Maybe before the season is over, I thought.

Back inside, Linda was making sandwiches for lunch. "I'm going to the office to check on things and then out to the duck hole with Paddle to let her run a little bit," I said. "I'll even take my shotgun in case I'm attacked by a crazy mallard."

Linda laughed. "This is supposed to be a heavy snow. Don't you get out there and get stranded."

"Nah, I'll take a couple of sandwiches with me, eat lunch at the creek and be back before the first flake falls." Everything was OK at the office. We were lucky that the snow was coming on a Friday, which gave us the weekend to get back to normal, hopefully.

Paddle was wired tight as I pulled up to the gate to the pasture that we had to cross to get to our little duck preserve. "Hang on, girl. I'll let you out in a minute and you can go play."

I parked the Bronco back in the stand of trees bordering the creek, feeding into

the big lake that was a water impoundment for the city. Paddle and I usually stayed away from the lake, concentrating on the creek for our efforts. It was getting colder, and I saw that the water bordering the bank was covered in skim ice. I took my shotgun out of the case and told Paddle, "OK, girl, go run." She jumped out the back of the Bronco, raced to the creek, broke the skim ice, got wet and ran back to me as if to ask, "Why is the water hard?"

Sleet began to bounce off the truck. "We don't have a lot of time, girl. Go play."

I walked through the tree line and followed Paddle as she edged toward the big water. I whistled to her, and as she was loping back to me, a duck came flying down the creek toward the lake. I snapped off a shot, and the duck crumpled and hit the ice about fifty yards from the bank. Paddle was off like a bullet, and all my whistling did no good in turning her. She was on a mission. Breaking the ice out to where the duck had landed, Paddle began quartering in a circle. Unfortunately, when the duck came down, the force of the fall knocked it under the ice and it couldn't be seen. Paddle kept at it until the bird popped up right in front of her. She grabbed it, swam back, walked up on the bank and presented me with the biggest black duck I'd ever seen. I couldn't believe it. Paddle's first duck retrieve, and it was one that I would remember forever. No big deal for her, though. She shook freezing ice from her coat and looked up at me as if to say, "OK, boss, what's next?"

Snow began to fall in earnest, and I decided we'd better get on home. Paddle settled down in her spot in the back, and I put the Bronco in four-wheel drive. The snow was getting deep fast. We were dripping wet from the sleet, snow and creek water, but the heater from the Bronco soon had us warm.

It was a great ride. Christmas carols were playing on the radio, and I sang along when Bing Crosby came on with his famous "White Christmas." Paddle dozed and didn't budge when I had to stop a time or two to clean the frozen windscreen. She was content in her favorite place.

Later that evening, after Linda and Tommy had gone to bed and I was closing up the house, I sat down in front of the dying fire and thought back to how much fun everyone had had that day with our first winter storm of the season. Tommy got to build his snowman, Linda made one of her favorite pound cakes, Paddle retrieved her first duck and was sleeping on her special rug beside the fireplace as content as only a hunting dog can be after a day afield.

And me? I thought, "What the heck?" and went over to my little den bar, poured three fingers of a single malt Scotch I was saving for a special occasion, and put another log on the fire. I can't think of many occasions that will get more special than this.

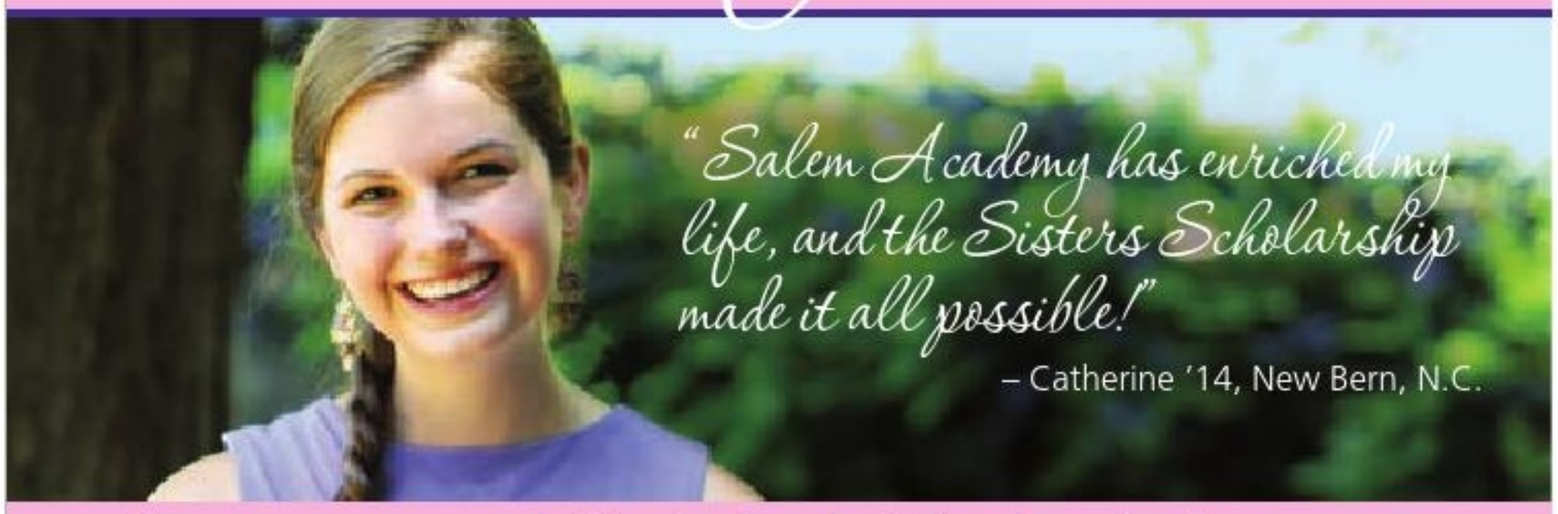
Tom Bryant is a lifelong outdoorsman and Salt's *Sporting Life columnist.*

THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE

LITTLE LUXURIES FOR THE HOME, COTTAGE OR CASTLE

1425 AIRLIE ROAD, WILMINGTON · 910.256.5505
THEFISHERMANSWIFE.COM

So Many Reasons
to love Salem Academy



Discover your own reasons why Salem Academy, the Southeast's premier college preparatory boarding and day school for girls, grades 9-12, offers a clear advantage in preparing girls for success.

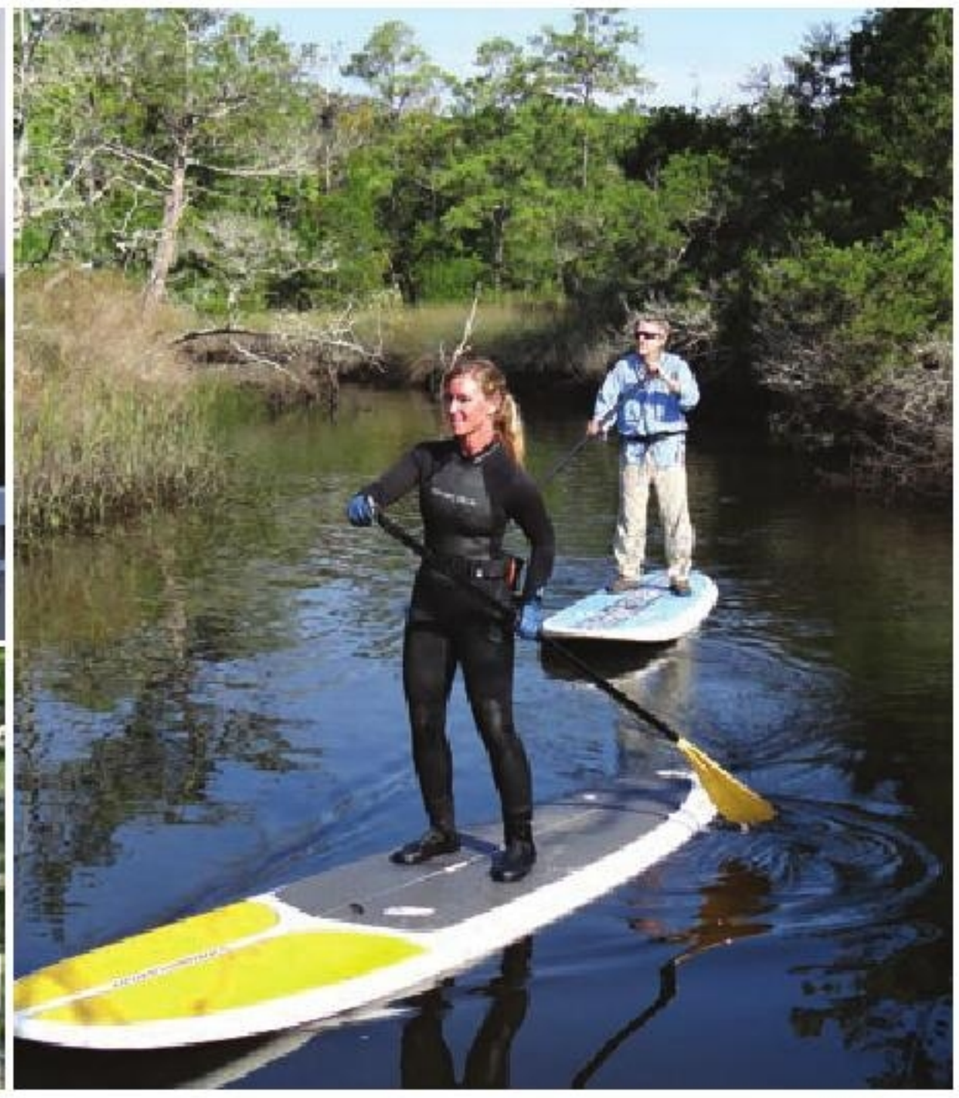
THE SISTERS MERIT SCHOLARSHIP
A full merit scholarship for outgoing, highly academic and community-minded boarding students, the Sisters Scholarship includes opportunities for exploring travel, careers and community service. Find out how your daughter can qualify for this or one of Salem Academy's other merit scholarships for day and boarding students.

deadline: January 2014
visit: believe.salemacademy.com | call: 1-877-407-2536

1772
SALEM ACADEMY
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Board for the Holidays

Or how we added a new family tradition in lovely Southport



By Virginia Holman

December. Here in Carolina Beach, the weekday tourists are gone after Labor Day weekend, and the weekenders clear out by November. Now only the flintiest fishermen remain. They dot the shore and the Kure Beach Pier, a grandparent or elderly uncle hunkered alongside in a lawn chair, armed with a Thermos and a bait bucket of mullet or squid. Their children are with them, bundled and dancing, oblivious to even a raw north wind. The only thing that will deter these old salts is steady rain.

As winter approaches, those of us who live here year-round hope for sunny days to bring some color to the landscape and cloudy nights to trap the warmth. The landscape, especially as night approaches, is forlorn. The roads are largely empty and seasonal businesses are shuttered. The horizon is often slung with heavy silver clouds, and the sea churns and froths until a trembling lip of foam lies like a white ribbon along the sand.

Then, out of nowhere, we will get a span of glorious weather: bright blue skies, mild air temperatures, glassy seas, the glint of dolphins surfacing, a report or two from offshore of a traveling whale. This is my favorite time to visit the nearby town of Southport. Each holiday season, I take my family there. I love to pick up a few holiday ornaments at The Christmas House (open year-round), get an eggnog latte at Port City Java, stroll the waterfront and the Old Smithville Burying Ground, and eat lunch at Live Oak Café on North Howe Street. I've been considering revamping our holiday tradition with some paddle boarding, so I've arranged a sunrise paddle board lesson, my first, with Southport Paddle and Sail. The air and water are chilly, and nothing to underestimate, but since I've got a three millimeter wetsuit for kayaking in cool weather, and since I'll be among experts, I decide to brave the elements and paddle board at dawn.

The morning of my trip, I opt to take the 6:15 a.m. ferry from Fort Fisher. The ferry leaves every forty-five minutes, and its transit along the Cape Fear River takes approximately half an hour. In the winter months, there's never a crowd.

If you've never taken the predawn ferry, it's truly something to experience. Today, there are twenty or so cars in line to board, and one by one, the ferrymen wave us onto the boat, direct us to our parking spots, and instruct us to stay in our vehicles until the ferry is underway and our captain sounds the horn. I roll down my window. The water is calm today and the winds are light, out of the east. A fine mist of fog hovers over the water, and the air is cool, yet soft. Later in the day it will be shirtsleeve weather. There's no indication of winter's coming bite. When the horn sounds, passengers are free to move about the boat. During the daylight hours, many of those with children head toward the stern, where they feed the laughing gulls and noisy boat-tailed grackles. In the twilight, I watch as a few people lean back and catch a few more minutes of sleep. I quietly exit my car and head to the

PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

upstairs observation area. After about fifteen minutes in the gloom, I'm rewarded by a view that must never get old: a long fetch of smoking water. The sun's still beneath the horizon, but it's lighting the clouds, and they in turn reflect the color to the river mist below. The ferry, the car windows, the bow of the boat — all are now washed a lambent gold. I'd complained at 4:45 this morning, when my alarm chimed. Now I'm sorry I groused. For what could be better than to be awake to see this moment?

When I disembark, I head to Southport Marina, where George and Marybeth Ray have stationed their shop. George meets me at the slip this morning. His wife and business partner, it turns out, is one of the captains on the Southport to Fort Fisher ferry. (Her ferry ran opposite to the one on which I arrived.) George is a charming and genteel man, with merry blue eyes.

Several others have joined us for today's lesson. I was a bit nervous about paddle boarding. I worried it was the sport for the uber-fit and young, simply a way of showing off a great set of abs. Yet the paddle boarders here today range in age from retiree to college student. Happily, as a middle-aged woman, I am in good company.

First George outfits us with what appears to be a fanny pack, but is actually a self-inflating life vest. In North Carolina, all paddle boarders are required to have a life vest on board. He then shows us how to use it, and I'm pleased it is so straightforward. Then, the real lesson begins. George shows me how to grasp the paddle, which is very similar to a long canoe paddle. "Let's start at the dock."

George shows us the proper stance on the paddle board, runs us through forward, reverse, sweep strokes, and sculls for maneuvering the board. "You'll find it easiest to engage your whole torso," he tells me. "Like this." Then, he grasps his paddle and imitates a forward stroke. The paddle isn't moved by his arms, but by the effort of his core muscles. As he completes the stroke, it appears he is taking a bow. "I bow to you; you bow to me," he says, and smiles.

Then, it's time to get on the board. George guides us over to the dock and we sit on the edge. The paddle boards float on the water beside us. He shows me how to maneuver so that I maintain a crouched posture as I move from the dock to the paddle board. This helps keep my center of gravity low, and increases my stability.

He runs me through it a couple of times before I'm ready to stand on the board. I feel a bit stiff, and George is encouraging. "Relax, and crouch a bit lower." I'm chagrined to discover my knees and hips don't want to bend much further.

"I guess I should do some paddle board yoga," I laugh.

"April, one of our guides, does paddle board yoga," he says. "She's working on her certification." As for me, I'm happy to finally be standing on the board.

It's a lovely feeling, once I relax. In a kayak, I can glide along the water's surface at eye level with a swan. On a paddle board, I can glide and see in to the marsh from above, rather than viewing only the edges. I find I rather like paddling at a higher altitude.

The other paddle boarders are gliding across the water when the sun slowly rises and burns off the fog. Beyond one marshy point a great egret hunts its breakfast. Our group passes a mere ten feet away. It regards us as harmless curiosities, and turns away.

Later, when my lesson is done, April Potter, Southport Paddle and Sail's main paddle board instructor, arrives at work. I've requested a scout of some of the better areas to paddle, and George and April are happy to accommodate. They often run custom trips around the dredge spoil islands, and along lower Dutchman's and Northern Dutchman's Creek, as well as in some of the wild twisty creeks between Southport and Oak Island. They load up the Boston Whaler with the paddle boards, and we're off across the ICW.

April says her favorite place to take paddle boarders is up some of the marsh creeks. If customers want to be out for the day, she'll anchor the boat, put a cooler with lunch on an extra paddle board and tow it behind her. April's fit and cheerful, the mother of a 3-year-old son with her husband and business partner, Royce Potter. Together, they run Potter's Seafood. Her husband's family are fifth generation fisherman, and they specialize in fresh, chemical-free seafood. "Most shrimpers dip their shrimp in preservatives when they are out for several days," she explains. "We just go out for a day, and sell it immediately." I make a note to get on their mailing list so I can stock my freezer with shrimp for the winter.

After looking at a variety of locations, I am delighted when George steers us in to a narrow creek a bit south of the power plant. This strikes me as a perfect place for my family to take a paddle board trip on a cold day. The water is flat and calm, the gators are in brumation, and the creek twists and turns in such a way that the trip will never grow dull. A little blue heron is perched beside us, and in the distance I see an osprey. "This is even a great place to do paddle board yoga," April says.

After my stiff, inelegant transfer from dock to paddle board this morning, it seems like I should take up yoga for the flexibility benefits. But yoga? On a paddle board?

I'm dubious.

On cue, April and George show me that indeed, yoga is possible on a paddle board as they each demonstrate how they can support their bodyweight using only their hands — while on the paddle board. It's truly impressive. I can't imagine, though, that I'll be able to imitate their nimble moves any time soon.

Once our scout is done, George encourages me to stop by the ferry terminal so that I make sure to hop aboard Marybeth's ferry. We have a lovely time chatting about her childhood in the Bahamas, and her love of piloting the ferry. She's one of only four female ferry captains in North Carolina and spent seven years working her way up through the ranks as a deckhand before assuming her perch in the pilothouse.

It's been a wonderful day, and I have a new holiday tradition to add to my family's annual winter excursion to Southport. I wonder if this is how Santa might arrive in Southport, via paddle board, a parcel of bundles in tow.

For the Southport-Fort Fisher Ferry schedule: www.ncdot.gov/ferry or (910) 457-6942

Southport Paddle and Sail
Info: southportpaddleandsail.com or (910) 294-0601
Email: info@southportpaddleandsail.com

Potter's Seafood
94 Yacht Basin Drive, Southport
Info: (910) 457-0101

The Christmas House
104 West Moore Street, Southport
Info: (910) 457-5166

Port City Java
113 North Howe Street, Southport
(910) 454-0321

Live Oak Café
614 North Howe Street, Southport
(910) 454-4360

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the Creative Writing Department at UNC Wilmington. She is also an ACA certified Level 3 Coastal Kayak Instructor and guides part time with Kayak Carolina.

non - profit

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Wilmington Art Association

The Premier Visual Arts Organization of the Cape Fear Coast

"Deck The Walls Show"

–Leadership Show –

Running through December

ACES Gallery

221 N. Front Street, Wilmington, NC

Special Exhibit Celebrating Art from WAA Board of Directors and Commitee Leaders

Cheryl McGraw

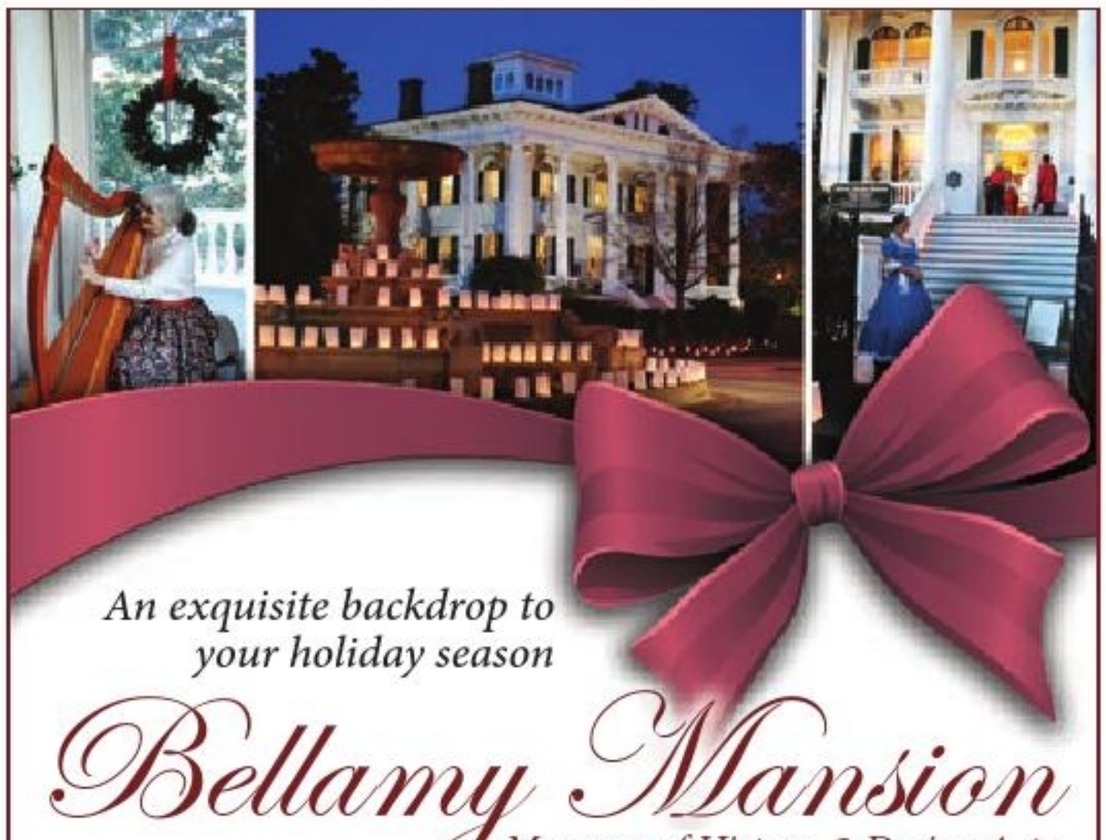
Elaine Cooper

Liz Hosier

Membership is open to artists & art lovers alike.

Join Today & Support Local Art

www.wilmingtonart.org



An exquisite backdrop to your holiday season

Bellamy Mansion

Museum of History & Design Arts

The museum operates normal tour hours year round!
Tuesday - Saturday 10 am to 5pm; Sunday – 1pm to 5pm
With a special Christmas Stroll, December 14th at 5 pm
Come experience the Bellamy Mansion Museum decorated in traditional Victorian fashion!

503 Market Street, Wilmington ✦ 910.251.3700

www.bellamymansion.org

info@bellamymansion.org

THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF WILMINGTON

During the month of December purchase an Anytime Membership for the price of a Weekday Membership!

That's a $35 savings!

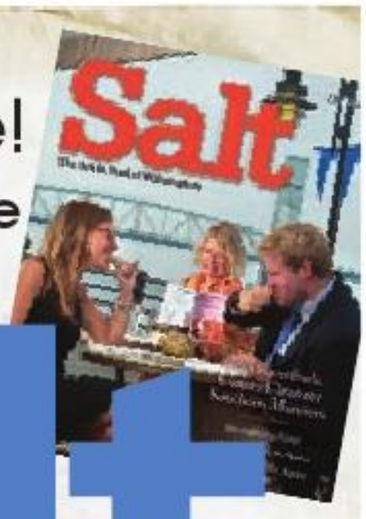
Happy Holidays!

116 Orange St · Wilmington NC 28401 · 910-254-3534 · www.playwilmington.org

Must mention ad for special pricing.

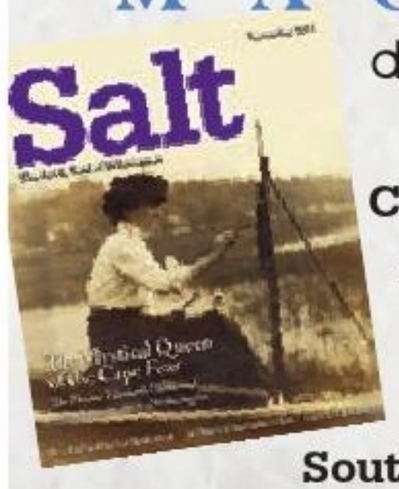
Never miss an issue!

Subscribe today and have



Salt

MAGAZINE



delivered to your home!

Call 910-833-7159 or mail payment to

Salt Magazine
P.O. Box 58,
Southern Pines, NC 28388

$45 In State
$55 Out of State

If God Made Jam

If God made jam the jars wouldn't necessarily glow
like Christmas lights or the new home of seventy fireflies,
the berries wouldn't have to be so divine
they dribbled rainbows and healed the sick,
each pip released a *Gloria* when it
cracked between your teeth,
and God's jam would never refuse to touch earthly bread —

Aunt Lydia has worked out this much
since Cousin Bobby told her about a comma
he skipped long ago while learning his catechism.
Now, on a rainy morning, spared the news
that lay in her grass and was too wet to read,
she's flexed her stiff hands and found them able
to slice the bread baked by a friend
and twist the lid from a royal-red jar,
and with the first crusty, raspberry bite
she's ready to affirm God does make jam.
It still counts if people figure among
the instruments that have been put to use,
and Bobby catechized wasn't wrong
when he pictured a deity, willing to work in the kitchen,
who made preserves and redeemed us.

– *Sarah Lindsay*

Greensboro poet Sarah Lindsay is a recipient of the Lannan Literary Fellowship. This poem was excerpted from her newest collection, Debt to the Bone-Eating Snotflower *(Copper Canyon Press, 2013).*

The Illustrated Twelve Days of Christmas

Though its origins are somewhat murky – it was first published without music in 1780 and eventually evolved into the folksy, buoyant ditty we've all come to love – the "Twelve Days of Christmas" cites a series of charming and increasingly splendid gifts given between Christmas Day and Epiphany. It's one of our favorite holiday traditions to sing it, and, given the golden opportunity to illustrate it with our friends and neighbors, we created a slightly different version. We hope you like it. Consider this our Christmas card to you!

a Robin Finch in an Oak Tree

Partridges are sparse round here this season, and it turns out they're not wild about pears. Fortunately we happened upon a Robin Finch, a rare and incredibly gracious species, smiling from her perch on an ancient oak.

Photograph by Ned Leary

2 Turtle Loves

Ginger Taylor and husband, John Marcucci, have been volunteering with the Wrightsville Beach Sea Turtle Project since 2007. Something about watching thousands of tiny loggerhead hatchlings racing toward the sea together makes life — and love — more precious.

Photograph by James Stefiuk

3 French Hens

Un, deux, trois Mademoiselles – Alize, Lily, and Lauren – sipping red wine and sparkling Louis Perdrier at Le Catalan French Café and Wine Bar. *Apéritif?* The Mediterranean Trio: olive tapenade, sun-dried pesto and hummus. *Oui* agree: all good things come in threes.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

4 Calling Birds

This gang has mastered the art of true quackery. The ducks, on the other hand, screen their calls. Wright Tisdale, David Thomas, Chris Ward, and Trec Tisdale, dressed for the hunt at Wrightsville Sound.

Photograph by Ned Leary

5 Golden Rings

They're all beautiful, says Brianna McLauren, but she insists that she only needs one. The future Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Swann at Reeds Jewelers. The Big Day: January 11, 2014.

Photograph by Matt McGraw

6 Geeks a-Laying

And to think you were singing "geese" this whole time. Cape Fear Community College's Computer Engineering students — and a lone Canada goose — make techno-savviness look easy-peasy. Students: Kyle Baxley, Chelsea Bumgarner, Nichalos Colburn, Bradley Cole, Earl Dixon, Herman A. Taylor

Photograph by Mark Steelman

7 Swans a-Swimming

Swan dives are second nature for this aquatic flock — and you should see them swim. Waves of Wilmington swimmers: Gabbie Black, Helen Duffy, Caroline Estep, Carter-Leigh High, Joseph High, Rhianne Hsu, Abbey Narayan

Photograph by Mark Steelman

8 Maids a-Milking

No milk stout here, but the smiling bar maids of Front Street Brewery are confident that Tiny Tim's Christmas Porter is exactly what Santa ordered. Two words: vanilla java. Get it while you can — this limited release batch is going fast. From left to right: Nique Morini, Kelsie Cole, Maggie Anthes, Raquel Silva, Casey Makely, Dena Corthum, Shelby Morris, and Julia Gage

Photograph by James Stefiuk

9 Ladies Dancing

Clara and friends break from rehearsal for a brief photo op. Then, back to dancing. Wilmington Ballet Company's *The Nutcracker* coming soon.

Lady dancers: Sadie Baldwin, Savannah Brooks, Mary Elizabeth Hester, Zoe Ann Laakmann, Sydney McAlear, Sofia Noonan, Iyanna Shields, Sophia Stoker, Annie DeVeaux Trask

Photograph by Mark Steelman

10 Lords a-Leaping

Boys will be boys. The lads of Cape Fear Academy leap for joy before the school day starts — and they have just as much fun in the classroom. Students from Ms. McGarry and Ms. Vliet's kindergarten classes, from left to right: Jace Williams, David Jordan, Hudson Huffman, Ethan Burnette, Luke Fascher, David Dunn, William Wells, Graham Leonard, Camden Croom, and Sawyer Stimmel.

Photograph by Mark Steelman

11 Pipers Piping

When Pipe-Major Andy Simpson asked seven from Port City Pipes and Drums to meet him in the middle of Water Street, they didn't miss a beat. Three from Cape Fear Wine & Beer take a smoke break and contemplate the scene.

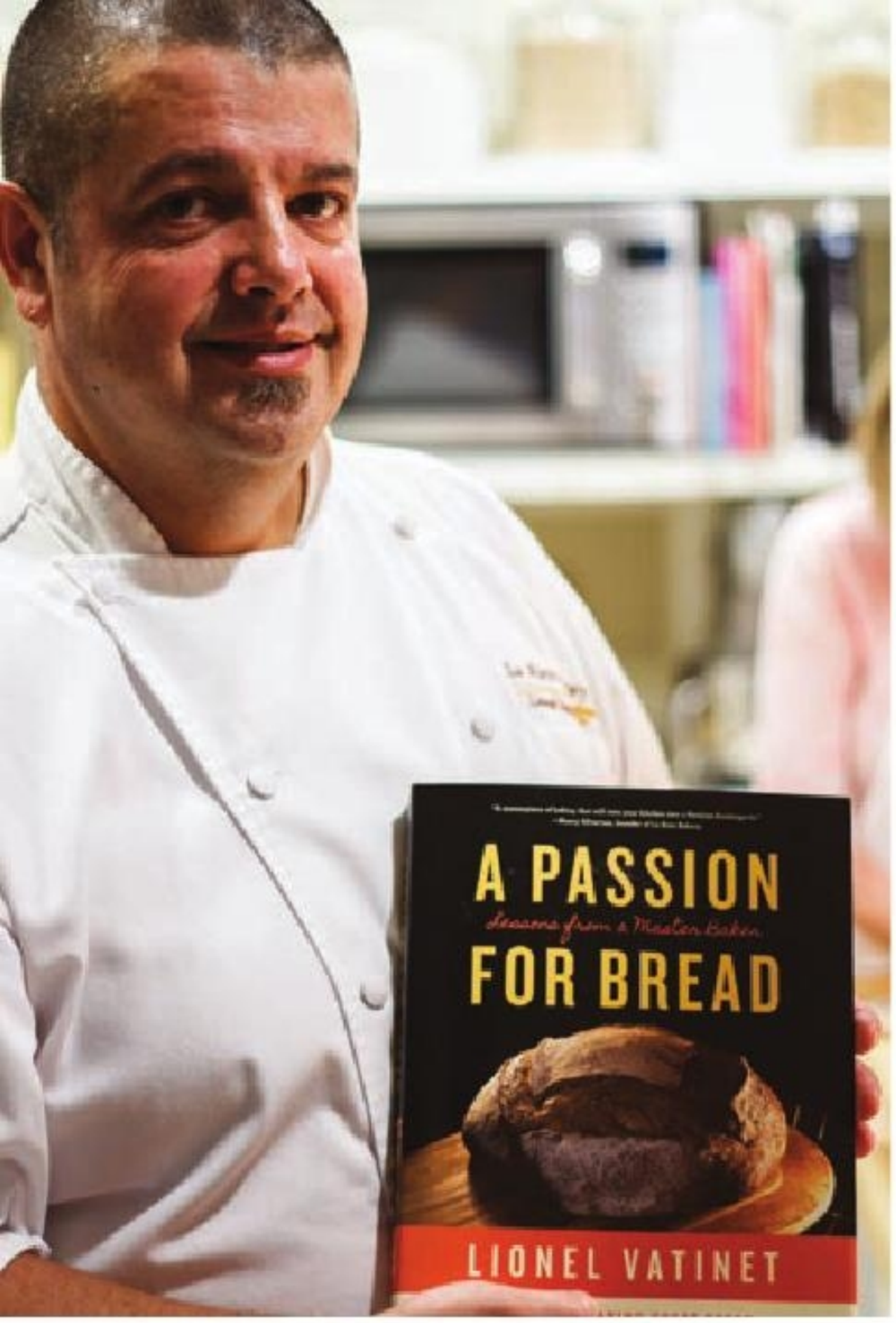
Bagpipers: Victor Ansel, Daryl Chambers, Dan Johnson, Bob Livingstone, Pipe-Major Andy Simpson, Ann Thur, Victor Wells, Charlie Wilkinson; Pipe smokers: Katelyn Burley, Barbara Gray, Steve Winthrop

Photograph by James Stefiuk

12 Drummers Drumming

They may dance to the beat of a different drum — twelve drums, in this case — but the folks who show up at Bottega Art and Wine for the Tuesday night jam session share a universal language: pa rum pum pum pum.

Photograph by James Stefiuk



Baker's Retreat

At their beautiful getaway place in Southport, Master French Baker Lionel Vatinet and his wife, Missy, have a hands-on approach to their home away from home

By Andrea Weigl · Photographs by James Stefiuk

It is shortly after 5 o'clock on a Thursday evening, and the living room of Lionel and Missy Vatinet's Southport home is filled with about a dozen people, both strangers and friends.

Lionel Vatinet, a guild-trained Master Baker originally from France, is prepping his kitchen for the baking class that has drawn these guests to his home. His wife, Missy, a petite, energetic blonde who spent much of her childhood on an 80-acre farm in Virginia, walks in the front door and introduces herself.

"Hi. I'm Missy," she says to one woman. Turning to another, she says, "Hi neighbor!" Within minutes, Missy is setting out bottles of Fat Tire and Bud Light beers and two French country wines, a Nicolas pinot noir and a Le Campuget grenache viognier. She also brings out chipotle pimento and bacon shrimp spreads along with platters of sliced bread, including ciabatta and Lionel's signature loaf, a light sourdough called La Farm, named after the couple's bakery in Cary, North Carolina.

The couple met in 1998 at a retail trade show in Chicago. Lionel was baking bread on the trade show floor for the San Francisco Baking Institute, and Missy was working for a large restaurant group based in Richmond, Virginia. They fell in love and decided to open their own bakery: Lionel would bake the bread, and Missy, who has a degree in hotel and restaurant management, would handle the business side. They chose North Carolina and opened the bakery in late 1999. A few years later, Missy's retired parents moved to Southport, and in 2006, Missy and Lionel bought a house there, too — the charming white cottage right across the street. With two daughters not yet in school, the Vatinets spend a lot of time in their home away from home, reveling in the Brunswick County community's small-town charm.

"It's Mayberry," Missy says.

And this home is their retreat.

Although Lionel comes to the coast as often as he can to take a break from the daily stresses of their business in Cary, he cannot escape the urge to teach others how to bake bread. In fact, when Lionel came to the United States in 1991, he traveled the country teaching American bakers how to make traditional French breads. Even now, despite a vibrant business with a storefront bakery and café, stands at several farmers markets, a wholesale business that supplies seven Whole Foods stores across the state, and consulting gigs all over the country, Lionel still carves out time to regularly teach baking classes to the public. When a Southport friend asked several years ago if Lionel would teach a baking class here in Southport, he agreed, and so occasionally — like on this Thursday night in late autumn — the Vatinets open their home to willing students. Folks learn about the classes

via Facebook, fliers at the Southport Yacht Club, and word of mouth.

"He has a genuine quest to share the art and science of bread baking and transfer that passion," says Missy.

This past fall, Lionel continued that quest by publishing the first of two cookbooks for the home baker, *A Passion for Bread: Lessons from a Master Baker.* The 300-page book is filled with step-by-step photos showing how to make baguettes, focaccia, ciabatta and even sourdough and whole grain breads.

Back in the Vatinets' living room, Missy points out the bathrooms and tells the students where to find more beer and wine. "Don't be shy," she urges. "This home is your home."

Moments later, Lionel emerges from a back bedroom wearing a white chef's jacket.

"OK. It's official," he says.

Welcome to La Farm Southport.

The students move a few feet from the living room to the Vatinets' open air kitchen with its double oven and silver KitchenAid mixer on the countertop. Lionel stands behind the butcher block kitchen island. A rustic dining room table, built by Missy's father, is positioned to form a "T" with the island. Risers under the table's legs elevate it so students can stand, watch Lionel, and use the surface to form and work dough. Within minutes, the Vatinets' kitchen can be transformed into a baker's workshop.

The students introduce themselves: Most are retirees, some are nurses, and one couple, Linda and Rick Pukenas, own the nearby Robert Ruark Inn and Southport Tours. The last student to introduce herself is Jean Hembree of Saint James, who drives to Cary twice a year to get a supply of the bakery's most popular bread, a white chocolate baguette. She tells Lionel: "I met you years ago at La Farm. I was one of the ladies trying to get you to move here."

In fact, it was La Farm customers from Southport who precipitated the chain of events that lured the Vatinets here in the first place. The couple were busy adding a café to their storefront bakery when some customers told them about a bakery that was for sale in Southport. Missy's recently retired parents offered to check out the town and the bakery for them. Missy and Lionel passed on the business opportunity in Southport, but her parents fell in love with the town and decided to move there from Virginia.

In the couple's Southport kitchen, Lionel demonstrates how to make ciabatta dough, adding water to the flour and mixing the dough by hand. His French accent is thick and the students quiet down to listen to his instructions.

"I'm sure you still don't understand me," Lionel quips. "But after two hours, it will be much better."

His hands, working the dough, speak for him.

Lionel spreads out the dough onto a jellyroll pan and tops it with olive oil, sautéed zucchini, caramelized onions, blue cheese and walnuts. Into the oven it goes so the students can enjoy it at the end of class. Meanwhile, the students move on to making their own ciabatta dough and then a basic pastry dough, trying to mimic Lionel's technique. Lionel walks around the table helping the students and answering questions while the room fills with a divine aroma.

The two-hour class passes quickly. Near the end, as folks gather up to-go boxes filled with apple tarts and baked ciabattas, a few students leaf through a copy of Lionel's book.

"The beauty of this book is it has over 450 pictures," Lionel tells them. Being able to see the technique is key to learning how to make bread, he explains, noting that that's why he only teaches hands-on classes.

As the class ends and students head for the door, Lionel gives them an even better offer: "If you have any questions, you can always knock on the door. We aren't very far."

Andrea Weigl is the award-winning food writer at The News & Observer. *Her first cookbook,* Pickles and Preserves: A Savor the South Cookbook, *comes out in March from UNC Press.*

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore

But the script was perfect for Bruce and Amanda Mason

By Ashley Wahl · Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

When local attorneys Bruce and Amanda Mason bought the old Sprunt House at 411 South Front Street, former home of singer/actress Linda Lavin, it was as if the script had already been written. Cue the flashback music. The year is 1978, and Amanda's pregnant mother is basking in the fluorescent glow of a small labor room at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C., where she is watching an episode of *Alice*.

"They actually had to turn off [Lavin's] show in order for my mom to be wheeled down to the delivery room," says Amanda, amused by how the scenario of her birth seems more remarkable now that she lives in the house where the woman who played Alice Hyatt used to cook, sleep and entertain guests. Although Lavin and husband, Steve Bakunas, completed a series of striking renovations, it wasn't the pickled wood flooring that caused the Masons to fall for the Mediterranean villa in the heart of historic downtown Wilmington. That particular feature didn't exactly fit their tastes. But there was something special about the house across the street from the old Governor Dudley place.

"The moment we pulled up, I knew that this house was the one," says Amanda, a vivacious blonde with a natural beauty that rivals the likes of any big-name actress. As she sips her morning coffee in the formal dining

1946 - 1986
AMERICAN
RED CROSS

room, golden light streaming in through the rounded windows, she ponders the divine workings of the universe and how, seven years ago, a chance encounter in a Wilmington courtroom changed everything. Her broad smile tells all.

"We hit it off right away, and almost immediately started planning a future together," says Amanda of her partner and husband, Bruce Mason.

Of course there were obstacles. Amanda was living in Raleigh with her two children from a former marriage. Bruce had an established firm that tied him to Wilmington. Though he lived in a charming craftsman-style house — the McCaig House — in historic Carolina Heights, it wasn't an ideal setup for four people. And so the search for the perfect house persisted. Long story short, they spent the first four years of their marriage commuting back and forth between their two homes. The kids knew Wilmington as the place they spent weekends.

And then they saw 411 South Front Street. Although the inside looked like a New York loft, Bruce and Amanda envisioned a traditional space with warm walls and stately columns and décor inspired by the French Quarter. For Madelyn, 14, and Mallik, 12, this would make Wilmington home. They moved in last May, on Bruce and Amanda's fourth wedding anniversary, and have since commenced an unhurried renovation to create their 4,500-square-foot dream home. No doubt this house is a work-in-progress. But when the Masons open their door to the public for the Historical Society of the Lower Cape Fear's Old Wilmington by Candlelight Tour this month, it will be obvious to visitors that Alice doesn't live here anymore.

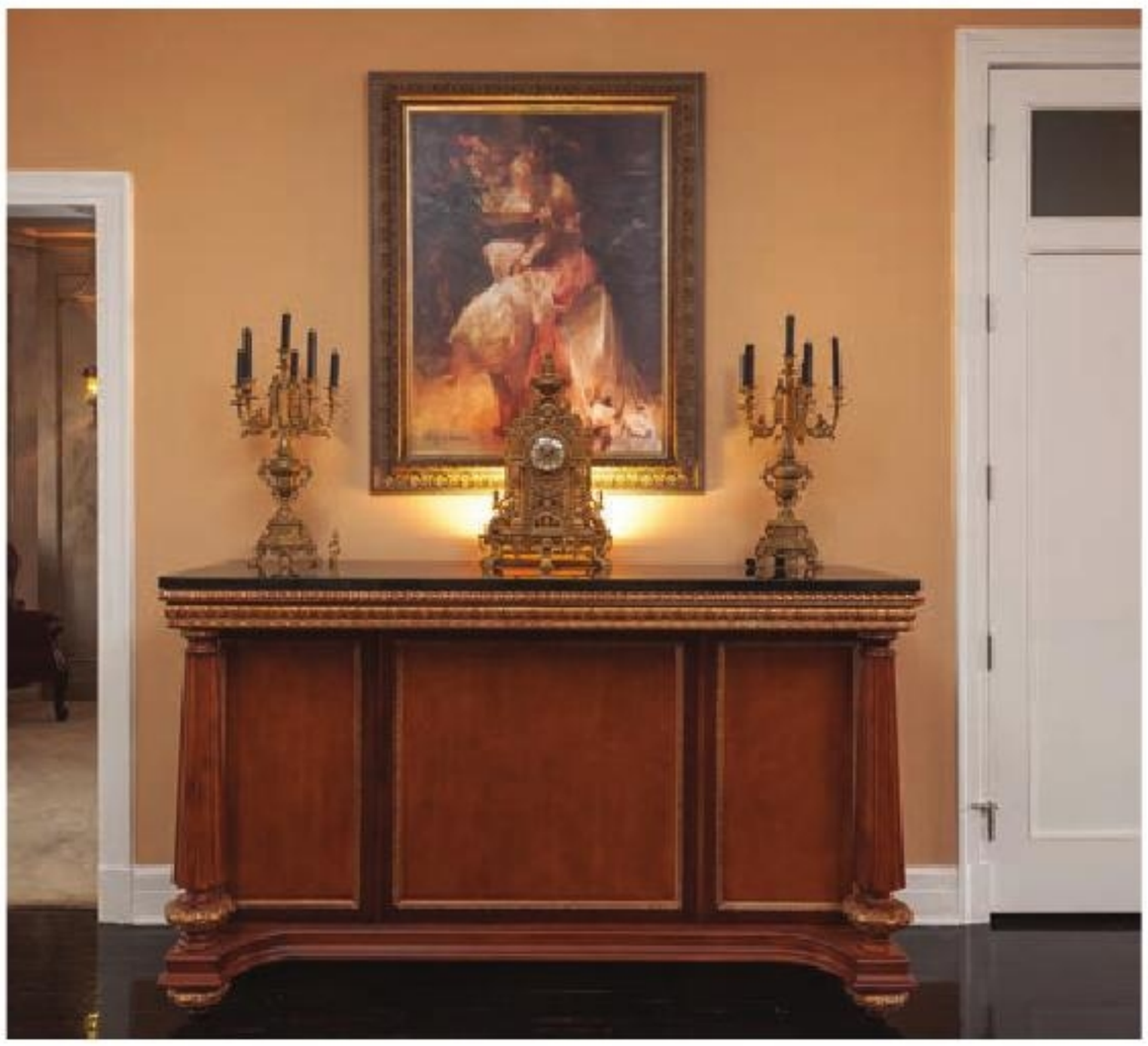
Although the inside looked like a New York loft, Bruce and Amanda envisioned a traditional space with warm walls and stately columns and décor inspired by the French Quarter.

One look will tell you 411 South Front has a storied past. Although the plaque by the gated entrance reads "Brockwell Place," locals know it as the Sprunt House.

In 1912, James Laurence Sprunt bought the property across the street from his parents' house, married the daughter of a prominent family from Baltimore, and built a stucco mansion in which he planned to start a family with his new bride. He could afford to do so because his family owned Alexander Sprunt & Son, the largest cotton exporting firm in the world. A historical chronology compiled by the New Hanover County Library reveals sudden tragedy:

In the winter of 1914–1915, the Prices visited Wilmington to be with their daughter, Amoret, who was expecting the birth of their child. On Tuesday, January 5, James Laurence Jr., was born at home. The joy was short-lived, however, for the young, 23-year-old mother died of toxemia of pregnancy due to postpartum hemorrhage.

James and son moved back into the house across the street, and 411 sat vacant until his uncle, Thomas, bought it in 1918. Eventually, the Brockwells lived there, followed by a series of renters including a U.S. Army general, an engineer with North Carolina Shipbuilding Company, and a cafeteria manager whose son was a stock clerk for French Radio Company. When the

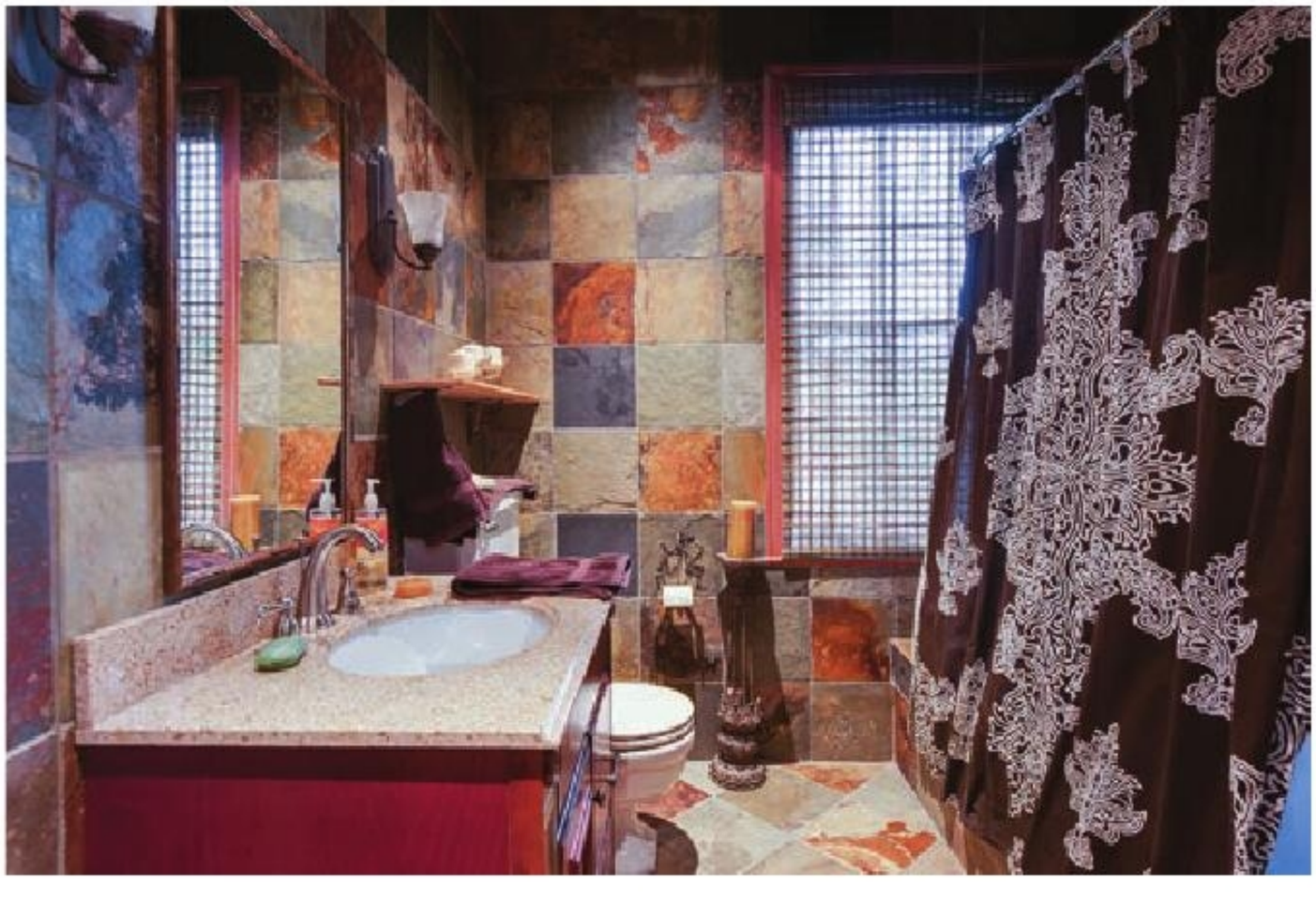


"This is our favorite room in the house," says Amanda of a fully stocked bar and lounge with paneled walls and club chairs and a vibe that can be summed up in two words: Frank Sinatra.

Brockwells sold the property to the American Red Cross in 1946, the Wilmington chapter occupied the house for twenty years. Lavin took the stage in 1995. The Masons have no doubt that her renovations generally enhanced both house and grounds.

"It was an interesting vision," says Amanda, recalling the gray walls and pickled flooring that Lavin chose for the main living space. The way the floor plan is designed, the open foyer flows seamlessly into a double parlor, and the visual axis continues through the curved windows at the back of the house. The result is spectacular. With the arched opening between the two parlors and the natural light flooding in through the back windows, the effect is like that of a subtle arcade. When Lavin lived here, the front parlor served as a modern dining room with swanky pendant lights and a narrow pass-through to the kitchen. The back parlor: a casual sitting room.

The Masons had other plans: a cozy great room with glossy espresso stained floors (front parlor), and an airy dining parlor with warm chocolate walls and a French gold chandelier suspended above the cabriole-legged table. Most of the furnishings are placeholders, but the sideboard in the foyer is here to stay. On display, a clock and candelabras set the Masons found at Antiques of Old Wilmington — their first purchase for the home. Window treatments and wall art coming soon.



Like most rooms in the house, the kitchen will eventually be transformed. Goodbye slate floors. Yellow cabinets were painted white, and though the Viking appliances are nice, Amanda ditched the commercial dishwasher. She'll keep the second sink.

Beside the gas range stove, a wooden cutting board on the ceramic tile countertops is covered with nicks and scratches, but Amanda admits it isn't used much.

"We love Aubriana's," she adds. This kitchen was designed for a cook.

"I'd like to have more of a pretty space here," says Amanda, whose vision includes a wine nook by the gas fireplace.

As for the nod to Mel's Diner — a stainless steel wall with a pass-through to the great room — don't grow too attached. The barroom, on the other hand, will stay as it is.

"This is our favorite room in the house," says Amanda of a fully stocked bar and lounge with paneled walls and club chairs and a vibe that can be summed up in two words: Frank Sinatra.

The first floor master suite features a built-in wardrobe that

not only takes up an entire wall, but boards up two windows.

"We're going to open that back up," says Amanda.

Upstairs, Madelyn's room is a junior suite with Tiffany blue walls, a massive dressing room, and a claw foot tub in the bath. On the night stand beside the king-size canopy bed, a lava lamp adds a youthful touch. Mallik claims the jungle safari room, which, like his sister's, opens to the balcony.

"I've definitely done my *Evita* performance from up here," says Amanda, laughing as she looks out at the expansive backyard, for which she and Bruce have several ideas. And as she thinks about their first Christmas here — music piping through the house, and, who knows, maybe even the smell of cookies baking in the grand kitchen — her eyes go all dreamy.

"I feel like I'm living in a fairy tale."

The Old Wilmington by Candlelight Tour will be held December 7–8. For tickets and information, call (910) 762-0492 or visit www.hslcf.org.

A Cactus Story

By Jamie Lynn Miller · Photographs by Mark Steelman

"Here it is, the famous picture," says Ron Fogle, who has been leafing through a stack of photographs for the last several minutes. Most of them are of his cherished succulents, which seem to fill him with infinite wonder — and surprise him every season with unexpected blossoms and growth. But this photo was taken in Tucson, Arizona, home of the nation's largest cacti. He wheels into a story about the time he decided to straddle the trunk of a saguaro cactus and couldn't get up. This particular saguaro must have been over five feet tall, he recalls, with long, sharp needles that generally keep most sightseers at arm's length. Lucky for Ron, his wife, Fay, was able to help him with the delicate procedure of unwrapping his legs, and he walked away unscathed. "The saguaro next to it was too big," says Ron, ever the prankster. "I couldn't get my legs around that one."

Over two decades ago, not long before he would meet Fay, Ron was living near Maysville, Kentucky (home of Rosemary Clooney and, at one time, George), where he worked as a registered nurse. There, on a backwoods jaunt with a friend to cut down a cedar tree for Christmas, he happened upon a lone, renegade cactus holding its own in the Appalachian soil among the more traditional Southern flora. "I took my knife and cut a couple buds, put 'em in the truck, and the rest was history," says Ron, matter-of-factly, as though there was never a doubt he'd spend the rest of his life studying, collecting and stocking a coastal greenhouse full of desert-friendly plants as crazy-looking as their official titles: abromeitiella brevifolia, euphorbia, myrtillocactus geometrizans . . .

There are three things you should know about cacti:

1. All cacti are succulents, but not all succulents are cacti.

From March to November, Ron's plants thrive in his backyard in Wilmington, where they're watered once every ten days or so. During the cold months, the winter-hardy cacti are left outside, but Ron moves the rest of his succulents into his ten-foot greenhouse to provide a more controlled climate for them. The greenhouse is a wonderland. And it's filled with fleshy plants of all sorts of wonky shapes and sizes. There's the Life Saver plant (huernia zebrina), which sprouts dark cherry-colored flowers that resemble the circular hard candy for which the succulent was named. Nearly a dozen small pots house sharp, pointy protrusions called pencil plants. The spiky abromeitiella looks like a fuzzy pillow or a plush throw rug, and the euphorbia is tied to a post; left to its own devices, this flowering succulent would probably grow through the ceiling. "I don't realize how much they've grown until I take them into the greenhouse," Ron explains. "Then I say, Aha! . . . I need more space!"

The alluaudia procera looks like an octopus, with tentacle-like vines that twist and turn in all directions. "That won first prize in this year's Hobby Greenhouse show for 'Most Unusual Container Plant,'" declares Ron, who is beaming like a proud parent at the grade school science fair. Some of his plants, like the myrtillocactus geometrizans, are just plain weird, he adds. "If it's weird, I gotta have it."

Originally from Erie, Pennsylvania — Dreary Erie, says Ron, the Mistake on the Lake — his nursing career led him to Kentucky, and eventually, to a management position in an OR. When the company downsized in the early 90s, Ron and Fay packed up their lives, started the car, and headed for the coast. They had passed through Wilmington several times over the years on their way to Myrtle Beach, and after re-acquainting themselves with the area, decided to call the Port City home. After spending that first year in Lion's Gate, near Wrightsville Beach, Ron and Fay moved to their North Chase homestead. The backyard meanders into a patch of woods, and that stretch of trees overlooks acre upon acre of neighboring farmland. Here, there's ample room to accommodate Ron's ever-burgeoning posse of plants. "I didn't have a big enough area to collect a whole lot of these until we moved to this house," says Ron. "Now I can't drive by a nursery without bringing something home!"

In the spirit of that first renegade Kentucky cactus, Ron has traveled far and wide to develop his collection of succulents. "I brought that agave from across the river, in Leland, you know, the LA area," he says with a chuckle. "Oh, we had fun transplanting that one," he adds. In fact, they needed a dolly just to wheel it to the car. Another agave known as a century plant came from Myrtle Beach. At the time, it easily fit in the backseat of the sedan. Today it stands at nearly six feet tall.

After fifteen years as an open-heart nurse at New Hanover Hospital, Ron is finally retired and able to work at his horticultural passion full time. Fay, who spent 24 years as a pediatric nurse, has entered semi-retirement,

2. There are 250 species of winter-hardy cacti that can thrive in Wilmington, North Carolina.

3. If you're straddling a saguaro cactus in the Arizona desert for the amusement of family and friends, consider bringing an extra set of legs.

working at a local surgeon's office a few days a week. While homes, jobs and schedules have changed, the cacti have been a constant factor throughout their twenty-two years together. Fay nods toward the greenhouse and the massive century plant right in front of it. "Personally, I've been injured one too many times. I don't go out there," she says.

Ron, who momentarily has stepped away from the conversation, reappears on the scene wearing a Flair Hair visor with cactus-like spiked tufts of silver and white "hair" sprouting from the top of it. He giggles along with Fay, readying her for the next round of antics. From the hologram eyeball gag glasses to the squeaky toy Ron uses to startle newcomers during introductory handshakes, the Fogle house is filled with practical jokes and goofy, good times. "We got married in Vegas," says Fay, grinning. "The chapel was called Church of the Desert . . . people you've never seen before, throwing rice . . . he wanted to do a drive-through wedding!"

While Ron tends to the watering, propagating and hands-on interaction with the plants, Fay enjoys the look — if not feel — of their private desertscape, and even continues the theme inside the home. The living room walls feature a mural of saguaros stretching up toward the high ceilings, while cowboy boots perched atop shelves double as works of art. Near the window, as though they're taking in the sunshine, a curiously life-like iguana figurine sits next to a ceramic frog and a fuzzy faux spider.

Fay plays with color around the house, painting desks and porch swings in brilliant hues that warm the home like cactus flowers brightening up a winter skyline. In the sun room, a sunny yellow desk is positioned beside a sprawling collection of good reads and picture-filled books depicting the succulents of the world. "This is my Barnes and Fogle bookcase," says Ron, running his hand along a row of books. "A lot of the catalogues don't have photos, so I have all these books instead. I can look at the pictures and say, 'Ooh, I want that one!'"

As for the fauna who share the cactus garden, some memorable creatures have graced the Fogle backyard. "Sparrows and wrens make nests in my crown of thorns, and last spring, a dove made her nest in one of my pots," says Ron. "I put a blanket down for the mama and babies, but eventually they flew away."

A fluorescent green lizard — this one, real — scampers up the side of the house. "There's Sally the Lizard," declares Fay, with delight. "They're all named Sally, actually." She points to a 400-pound rock fountain she and Ron recently installed in the front yard, one of many projects that help keep her busy. "I need to be doing things," says Fay. "I can't stand to sit around."

"Oh, I can sit around," declares Ron with a smile, perhaps thinking back to his encounter with a certain saguaro cactus, and how it almost got the last laugh.

ALMANAC

December

By Noah Salt

"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?"

— Bob Hope

The Almanac Guy sure digs Christmas, everything about it — the food, the wacky decorations, the over-the-top-shopping. But it's recently come to our notice that certain Grinchy members of this very magazine staff — who shall remain unnamed pending epiphanies of scale — do not share our passion for life's most popular holiday, reserving particular absence of amity for good old St. Nick, aka Santa Claus. To paraphrase poet and sage Dr. Seuss, they hate Christmas, the whole Christmas season — don't ask us why, no one quite knows the reason.

In the spirit of the season, we hereby concede that Christmas is different for everyone. To many it's a festive secular time of family gathering, feasting and gift-giving in the spirit of an old chap who travels the world in an aging sleigh and cheap red suit, delighting children of all ages, while to many others it's a sacred religious moment memorializing the birth of a savior child.

Whatever else is true, the traditions and symbols of Christmas are perhaps the oldest and best known in human society. Herewith, a brief summary.

Much of Christmas tradition hails from pre-Christian pagan solstice rituals of bonfires and feasting, and decorating homes for the long, drab winter with forest greenery — hence the birth of wreaths and, eventually, the Christmas tree.

The first proper Christmas carols date from Rome in 129 AD when a Roman bishop decreed that a carol called "Angel Hymn" should be sung at Christmas services. The first carols were merely 12th and 13th century ecclesiastical processionals. It wasn't until the early 19th century — Victorian England, in fact — that English folk and church music blended with the old Norse tradition of wassailing — the act of traveling from house to house to sing songs that wished neighbors good health and cheer in exchange for small presents or food — caught on with a vengeance.

Long before Madison Avenue gave us the jolly red image of Santa Claus for a Coca-Cola ad, St. Nicholas, the fourth century Turkish bishop famed for his miracles and generosity to believers who left coins in their empty shoes for him to give to the poor in exchange for blessings, is believed to have blended with Holland's popular kindly Sinterklaas figure. Old Anglo-Norman Father Christmas, Pére Nöel, was originally mentioned as a living symbol of Christian kindness in a 15th century carol. Only after a lengthy and successful battle with puritan opponents of public holiday celebrations in the 17th century did Father Christmas become the wildly popular figure of gift-giving, providing the blueprint for modern Santa Claus.

All we can say to any poor soul who would mock the kind old man in the bright red suit, wherever he comes from: When you stop believing in Santa Claus, you'll just get bad neckties for Christmas. If nothing else, do remember the real poor and leave them a few coins in your empty shoes — or better yet, a $50 in the Salvation Army kettle.

Our Favorite Winter Plant

Helleborus atrorubens, aka the "Christmas or Lenten Rose," will add a touch of glamour and drama to any late-winter border. Happiest in partial or light shade and moist but well-drained soil, hellebores do not like to be moved once established.

— from *Latin for Gardeners* by Lorraine Harrison

The Lazy Gardener's Christmas List

More days off in 2014, better yet the four-day work week!
No premature spring, bad for tender blooms
A beautiful English plant spade
French pruning shears
A dog that finally quits digging where he shouldn't
A lemon tree of our own
Fewer mosquitos
Abundant rain/No drought
A decent hammock to snooze in after work

December 2013

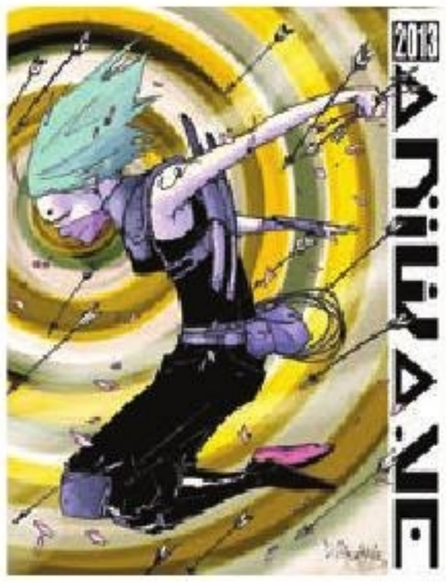
Arts Calendar

Free admittance to Airlie & the Cape Fear Museum

12/1

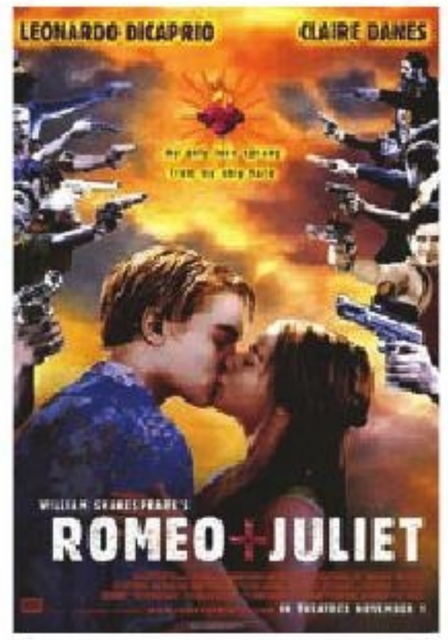
Enchanted Airlie

12/1-21



Aniwave Festival

12/8



Shakespeare at Thalian Hall

12/12

12/1 Free Day at Airlie

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free admission on the first Sunday of each month. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

12/1 Free Day at the Museum

1–5 p.m. Free admission on the first Sunday of each month. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

12/1–8 Festival of Trees

10 a.m. – 8 p.m. A winter wonderland featuring holiday trees sponsored and decorated by local businesses and organizations. Proceeds from tree sponsorships benefit Lower Cape Fear Hospice Foundation. Tickets: $12/adult; $8/group rate; $6/children; sales benefit CAM. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

12/1–21 Enchanted Airlie

5–7 p.m. & 7–9 p.m. A self-guided, half-mile stroll through the gardens featuring an array of festive lights and holiday displays. Santa Claus makes an appearance and local venders sell coffee, hot chocolate, popcorn and more. Admission: $10–22. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

12/3 Good Friends of Wilmington

11:30 a.m. Celebrate the spirit of giving with this social and luncheon. Funds raised serve individuals and families in need in our community. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: www.goodfriendswilmington.org.

12/4 American Big Band Concert

4 & 8 p.m. American Big Band: Home For The Holidays. Twelve-piece band and cast of eight singers and dancers dazzle in this fully staged, costumed and choreographed production that mixes popular classics with the latest show tunes. Tickets: $18–35. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org

12/5 Tree Lighting & Movie

6 p.m. Christmas Tree Lighting features a visit from Santa, followed by the screening of a holiday classic, *A Christmas Story*. Free admission; concessions available for purchase. Greenfield Lake Park, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-7855 or www.wilmingtonnc.gov/greenfieldtree.

12/5 History Lecture

6:30 p.m. Local historian and author Beverly Tetterton presents "Wilmington Uncovered," an encore presentation that includes over one hundred rarely seen images of the Port City. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymanison.org.

12/5 Ballet For Young Audiences

7 p.m. *Snow White*. A 60-minute, narrated version of this classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale. Tickets: $14/gallery; $20/reserved seating. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

12/5 Bluegrass Concert

7:30 p.m. Bluegrass veterans Jamie Dailey and Darrin Vincent present "A Dailey and Vincent Christmas." Tickets: $10–29. Odell Williamson Auditorium, Brunswick Community College, 50 College Road Northwest, Supply. Info: (910) 755-7416 or www.bccowa.com.

12/5–8 Children's Theater

7 p.m.; 3 p.m. (Sunday) Thalian Assocation Children's Theater (TACT) presents *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. Community Arts Center, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.thalian.org.

12/6–7 Dinner Theater

7 p.m. Dinner theater adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic, *A Christmas Carol*, with a Victorian-inspired four-course meal and party favors. Tickets: $30–48. Doors open at 6 p.m. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

12/6–7 Ballet For Young Audiences

7 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. (Saturday) *The Nutcracker*. A 60-minute, narrated version of this classic tale, featuring talented dancers, exquisite scenery, and beautiful costumes. Tickets: $14 (gallery); $20 (reserved seating). Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

12/6 Christmas Parade

7:30 p.m. Island of Lights Festival Christmas Parade proceeds from Atlanta Avenue down Lake Park Boulevard to the Federal Point Plaza in Carolina Beach. Expect floats, bands, and Santa. Between Harper and Hamlet Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: www.islandoflights.org.

12/6–7 Light & Train Spectacular

6:30–8 p.m. Thousands of twinkling lights, cookies, cider, and a visit from Santa. Wilmington Railroad Museum, 505 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-2634 or www.wrrm.org.

12/7 Battleship Alive

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Watch and interact with World War II living history interpreters as they reenact daily duties and drills. Tickets: $6–12. Battleship *North Carolina*, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

12/7 Adult Nature Program

9 a.m. Backyard Birding and Bird Feeding: Learn how to build your own backyard bird oasis, plus birding basics. Admission: $10. Preregistration required. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

12/7 Winter Open House

10:45 a.m. – 12 p.m. Live bird program with

Tim the Pelican and Scarlet the Hawk from Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter plus a nature art exhibit and sale featuring the works of local artist Chuck Carmack. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

12/7 Art for Kids

11 a.m. Art program for kids ages 3–12 featuring holiday themed projects that children can keep or use as a gift. Free admission. Totally Personalize It, 4314 Market Street, Suite #17, Wilmington. Info: (910) 620-1534 or www.totallypersonalizeit.com.

12/7 Jingle Ball

6 p.m. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres followed by dinner and dancing with live music by The Imitations. Tickets: $100. Proceeds support the fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Arboretum. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7671 or www.gardeningnhc.org.

12/7 Christmas Flotilla

6 p.m. Island of Lights Festival Christmas Flotilla features fishing boats and pleasure vessels electrically decorated for a spectacular display on the Intracoastal Waterway. Free admission. Carolina Beach Yacht Basin and Marina, 216 Canal Drive, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-0211 or www.islandoflights.org.

12/7 Fur Ball

6:30 p.m. Black tie, red carpet fundraising party featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine and champagne, plus live and silent auctions, live music by Bibis Ellison, and entertainment by psychic Pat Vlach. Tickets: $90. Proceeds benefit the rescue and adoption efforts of the Pender Humane Society and Adopt an Angel of New Hanover County. Country Club of Landfall, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 233-4793 or www.wilmingtonfurball.com.

12/7 Christmas by the Sea

6:30–8:30 p.m. Storytelling by the fire, holiday themed movies at the Gazebo, puppet shows, caroling, ornament making and more. Free admission. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Boulevard. Info: (910) 470-2024.

12/7–8 Holiday Train Expo

1–6 p.m. The Cape Fear Model Railroad Society presents its annual Holiday Train Expo, which sets up at the former Salt Shaker Bookstore and features an amazing display of toy trains making their way through eight miles of tracks and various villages, parks, and landscapes. Display also includes a water feature and boats, a pre-World War II train, a Christmas village, an interactive town, plus a raffle for a chance to win a model train set. Admission: $2–3. Salt Shaker Bookstore & Cafe, 705 South Kerr Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 274-4805 or www.capefearmodelrailroadsociety.org.

12/7–8 Candlelight Tour

4–8 p.m. (Saturday); 2–6 p.m. (Sunday) Tour 18 historic homes, all decorated for the holidays. Admission: $25–30. Proceeds benefit the Historical Society of the Lower Cape Fear. Latimer House Museum, 126 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-0492 or www.latimerhouse.org.

12/7–8 Polar Express

4:30 & 5:30 p.m. A reading of a classic story, *The Polar Express*, plus a visit from Santa, a special "first gift," treats for the kids, and hot chocolate for all. Tickets: $5. Pre-registration required. Wilmington Railroad Museum, 505 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-2634 or www.wrrm.org.

12/7–8 Holiday Concert

8 p.m.; 4 p.m. (Sunday). The Wilmington Symphony Orchestra and UNCW Opera Outreach Program present a fully staged performance of Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, a warm and compassionate story that captures the essential spirit of Christmas. Tickets: $27; $6/students. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 962-3500. Info: www.wilmingtonsymphony.org.

12/8 Aniwave Festival

10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Event features animation, cosplaying, video games, comic book industries, plus workshops, demonstrations, games, and more. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: www.aniwave.org.

12/8 Arts & Crafts Sale

11 a.m. – 4 p.m. A back lawn showcase of local and one-of-a-kind gifts; craft demonstrations including woodcarving, glass blowing, blacksmithing and quilting; plus a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus. The whole family can enjoy a wagon ride through the woods ($5), and the 1853 Manor House and grounds will be adorned with seasonal decorations. Free admission. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Hwy 17 North. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org.

12/8 Tuba Christmas

3 p.m. Tuba players of all ages and abilities, directed by Daniel Johnson. Free admission. Independence Mall, 3500 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-7559.

12/8 Holiday Parade

5:40 p.m. Parade begins at North Front and Walnut Streets and travels south on Front Street to Orange Street, then back north on Water Street. Free admission. Historic Downtown Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-7855.

12/8 Candlelight Brass Concert

6:30 p.m. Chamber Music Wilmington will hold a candlelight brass concert featuring the Carolina Brass Ensemble. Tickets: $25. Student/active military discounts available. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 16 North 16th Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 962-3500. Info: www.chambermusicwilmington.org.

12/9–10 Li'l Explorers

10–11 a.m. Stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes, and crafts for kids ages 2–5. Theme: Animal Armor. Admission: $3. Pre-registration required. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

12/10 Holiday Open House

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Seasonal refreshments, decorations, and live music by local choral and instrumental groups. Free admission. Fort Fisher State Historic Site, 1610 Fort Fisher Boulevard South, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-5538 or www.nchistoricsites.org.

12/12 Junior Naturalist Program

1:30–3 p.m. Kids ages 6–11 can learn about plants and animals living in the park through fun, hands-on activities. Theme: Holidays in the Woods. Includes a hike to see how critters survive the chilly winter, plus the making of a seasonal craft. Admission: $5. Pre-registration required. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

12/12 Shakespeare Club Film

7:30 p.m. *Romeo & Juliet* (1996). Film retains the original Shakespearean dialogue, but the Montagues and Capulets are represented by warring business empires where swords are merely a brand of gun and bored youths are easily spurred toward violence. Admission: $8. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

12/12–15 Live Musical Theater

8 p.m.; 3 p.m. (Sunday) Thalian Association presents *Willy Wonka*, a musical adaptation of the Roald Dahl classic, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Admission: $15–30. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalian.org.

12/12–15 Live Theater

8 p.m.; 5 p.m. (Sunday) *The Dialogues of Strange Bedfellows*. Admission: $5–10. Browncoat Pub & Theatre, 111 Grace Street, Wilmington. Info: www.browncoattheatre.com.

12/13–14 Light & Train Spectacular

6:30–8 p.m. Thousands of twinkling lights, cookies, cider and a visit from Santa. Wilmington Railroad Museum, 505 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-2634 or www.wrrm.org.

12/13–14 Dinner Theater

7 p.m. (Fridays and Saturdays) Dinner theater adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic, *A Christmas Carol*, with a Victorian-inspired four-course meal and party favors. Tickets: $30–48. Doors open at 6 p.m. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

12/13–14 Twelve Drinks Of Christmas

7 p.m. Twelve bartenders from downtown restaurants and bars compete for the best seasonal cocktail. Net proceeds benefit the Cape Fear Literacy Council. Tickets: $25/advance; $30/day of event. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-2745 or www.cfliteracy.org.

12/13–15 Fantasy Christmas Show

7 p.m. A festive evening of family entertainment featuring Frosty and his penguin friend, Harriet Hippo, The Grinch, Cookie Monster, dancing bears, Santa and his elves, and more. Bring a chair and dress warm; it always snows at this show. Free admission. K Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216.

12/14 Learn to Curl

8 a.m. Coastal Carolina Curling Club provides introductory information about the Winter Olympic sport of curling. Learn the basics, including delivering the stone, sweeping, game strategy and scoring. Admission: $20. Wilmington Ice House, 7201 Odgen Business Lane, Wilmington. Info: (910) 520-2670 or www.coastalcurling.com.

12/14 Art for Kids

11 a.m. Art program for kids ages 3–12 featuring holiday themed projects that children can keep or use as a gift. Free admission. Totally Personalize It, 4314 Market Street, Suite #17, Wilmington. Info: (910) 620-1534 or www.totallypersonalizeit.com.

12/14 Arts and Crafts Festival

2–5 p.m. Paintings, jewelry, stained glass, pottery, and other hand crafted items and goods for sale. Free admission. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wilmington, 4313 Lake Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 392-6454 or www.uufwilmington.org.

12/14 Holiday Home Tour

4–9 p.m. Self-guided tour through some of Pleasure Island's most beautiful homes, all decked out for the holidays. Tickets: $10. Info: (910) 458-5006 or www.islandoflights.org.

12/14 A Christmas Stroll

5 p.m. The Burgwin-Wright House and Bellamy Mansion Museum host a festive holiday evening filled with music, dancing, costumes, refreshments and more. Enjoy a trolley ride or and candlelit stroll through downtown Wilmington. Tickets: $25/adults; $5/children ages 5–12; available at the Burgwin-Wright House, Bellamy Mansion Museum, local Harris Teeter stores, or online. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

12/14 Santa by the Sea

5:30 p.m. Explore the Aquarium and delight in the festivities, including story time with Mrs. Claus, meeting Santa, and more. Admission: $12–14. NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8257 or www.ncaquarium.com.

12/14 Christmas by the Sea

6:30–8:30 p.m. Storytelling by the fire, holiday themed movies at the Gazebo, puppet shows, caroling, ornament making and more. Free admission. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Boulevard. Info: (910) 470-2024.

12/14 A Celtic Christmas

7:30 p.m. Traditional Irish music with Jennifer Licko and her band. Free admission. St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1416 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-9693.

12/14–15 Handmade Wilmington Holiday Market

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Saturday); 10 a.m.– 4 p.m. (Sunday) A juried, modern artisan market that features contemporary local artisans and craftspeople. Find handmade wares including jewelry, original artwork, body care products, pet items, artisan food products, textiles, home goods, clothing and accessories, children's items, and baked goods. Proceeds benefit Feast Down East; a donation to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina will provide free entry into the Handmade Wilmington Shopper's Choice raffle. The Artworks, 200 Willard Street, Wilmington. Info: www.handmadewilmington.org or www.facebook.com/handmadewilmington.

12/14–15 Holiday Train Expo

1–6 p.m. The Cape Fear Model Railroad Society presents its annual Holiday Train Expo, which sets up at the former Salt Shaker Bookstore and features an amazing display of toy trains making their way through eight miles of tracks and various villages, parks, and landscapes. Display also includes a water feature and boats, a pre-World War II train, a Christmas village, an interactive town, plus a raffle for a chance to win a model train set. Admission: $2–3. Salt Shaker Bookstore & Cafe, 705 South Kerr Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 274-4805 or www.capefearmodelrailroadsociety.org.

12/14–15 Polar Express

4:30 & 5:30 p.m. A reading of a classic story, *The Polar Express*, plus a visit from Santa, a special "first gift," treats for the kids, and hot chocolate for all. Tickets: $5. Pre-registration required. Wilmington Railroad Museum, 505 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-2634 or www.wrrm.org.

12/15 Met Opera Live in HD

12:55 p.m. Verdi's *Falstaff* (encore presentation). Lumina Theater, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3195.

12/15 Homemade Holiday Shorts

6 p.m. An hour of music and storytelling where local entertainers and the winner of the Homemade Holiday Shorts' Story Contest share and celebrate wintertime traditions. Live broadcast (91.3fm) followed by reception. Doors open at 5:20 p.m.; Guests must be seated by 5:50 p.m. The MC Erny Gallery at WHQR, 254 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1640 or www.whqr.org.

12/15 Jazz Brunch

12–2 p.m. Jazz brunch with Nina Repeta Jazz Trio. Tickets: $15–20. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

12/15 Dance Showcase

2–4 p.m. The Dance Cooperative provides monthly informal showings to afford working artists a place to present works in progress to be reviewed and critiqued in a nurturing environment. Open to working choreographers, dancers and the general public. Donations appreciated. Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

12/16 Holiday Tea

2 p.m. Three courses: finger sandwiches, scones, desserts and confections served with tea, followed by door prizes, raffles and giveaways. Tickets: $35. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 232-0127 or www.bellamymansion.org.

12/16–17 Li'l Explorers

10–11 a.m. Stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes, and crafts for kids ages 2–5. Theme: Reindeer Games. Admission: $3. Pre-registration required. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

12/18 Snake & Turtle Feeding

4–4:30 p.m. Enjoy a brief presentation about the live animals on display in the Event Center and then watch them feed. For ages 3 and up. Registration: $1. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

12/19 Birding Trail Hike

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hike along the North Carolina Birding Trail beginning at Brunswick Town. Hike is approximately two miles. Admission: $10 (includes transportation from park). Pre-registration required. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

12/19 NC Symphony Holiday Pops

7:30 p.m. Pops concert features Resident Conductor William Henry Curry leading the state's premiere orchestra in treasured celebrations of the season, including "Silver Bells"; "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"; "Fantasia on Greensleeves", plus the always popular audience sing-a-long. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: www.ncsymphony.org.

12/19–22 Live Musical Theater

8 p.m.; 3 p.m. (Sunday) Thalian Association presents *Willy Wonka*, a musical adaptation of the Roald Dahl classic, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Admission: $15–30. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalian.org.

12/20 Baroque Christmas Concert

7:30 p.m. The Tallis Chamber Orchestra presents a Baroque Christmas Concert. Free admission. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 16 North 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-4578 or www.tallischamberorchestra.com.

12/20 – 21 Dinner Theater

7 p.m. (Fridays and Saturdays) Dinner theater adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic, *A Christmas Carol*, with a Victorian-inspired four-course meal and party favors. Tickets: $30–48. Doors open at 6 p.m. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Verdi's *Falstaff*

12/15

12/20 Bluegrass Concert

8 p.m. Chatham County Line: Electric Holiday Tour. A full acoustic set performed by the band in their usual one-mic fashion. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets: $17–25. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Forth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

12/21 Santa by the Sea

5:30 p.m. Explore the Aquarium and delight in the festivities, including story time with Mrs. Claus, meeting Santa, and more. Admission: $12–14. NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8257 or www.ncaquarium.com.

12/21–22 Holiday Train Expo

1–6 p.m. The Cape Fear Model Railroad Society presents its annual Holiday Train Expo, which sets up at the former Salt Shaker Bookstore and features an amazing display of toy trains making their way through eight miles of tracks and various villages, parks, and landscapes. Display also includes a water feature and boats, a pre-World War II train, a Christmas village, an interactive town, plus a raffle for a chance to win a model train set. Admission: $2–3. Salt Shaker Bookstore & Cafe, 705 South Kerr Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 274-4805 or www.capefearmodelrailroadsociety.org.

12/22 Christmas Cantata

5 p.m. The Grace United Methodist Church Chancel Choir presents "Journey of Promises," a Christmas Cantata by Joseph M. Martin featuring music director Jerry S. Cribbs and organist Judith Siebold. Grace United Methodist Church, 401 Grace Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-5197 or www.gracedowntown.net.

Tea at Bellamy Mansion Museum

12/16

12/23 Holiday Film

7:30 p.m. *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). Tickets: $10. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

12/28–29 Live Musical Theatre

8 p.m. City Stage presents *Cabaret*. Tickets: $25. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

12/29 Sacred Harp Singing

2–4 p.m. Cameron Art Museum and WHQR Public Radio present an a cappella social singing style dating back to Colonial America. The music is loud, vigorous and intense. No previous experience necessary. Songbooks provided. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com

12/31 A Night at Moulin Rouge

6 & 9:30 p.m. Cabaret dinner show, champagne toast, and party favors. Tickets: $80; $150/couple. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

12/31 New Year's Eve Gala

7 p.m. A festive evening featuring a live Broadway theater production by City Stage, plus a DJ, dinner, dancing, and a champagne toast. Proceeds benefit Thalian Hall. Tickets: $125. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

Chatham County Line

12/20

Holiday Film Screening

12/23

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Tuesday — Cape Fear Blues Jam

8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Tuesday — Improv Comedy

8 p.m. LitProve: Long Form Improv at Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

Wednesday — T'ai Chi at CAM

12–1 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Wednesday — ComedyNOW

8 p.m. Local, regional and national acts, open mics, standup, films and more. Bar and kitchen open. Tickets: $3. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Thursday — Yoga at CAM

12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. These sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Thursday — CAM Public Tours

7:30 p.m. Explore the newest exhibits at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Friday — Yoga at CAM

5:30–6:30 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. These sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants.Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Saturday — Farmers' Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artists and crafters. Open through December 21. Riverfront Park, Historic Downtown Wilmington. Info: www.wilmingtonfarmers.com.

Saturday Super Saturday Fun Time

3 p.m. Live theater and variety show. Tickets: $8. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Sunday — CAM Public Tours

2 p.m. Explore the newest exhibits at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

To add a calendar event, please contact Ashley at ashley@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

Port City People

Airlie Oyster Roast

Friday, October 18, 2013

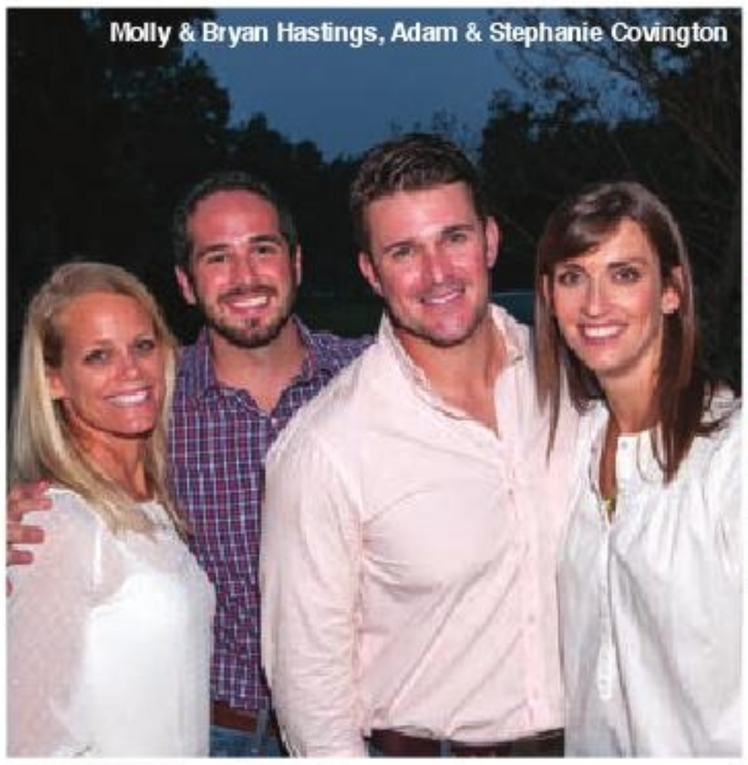
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Sea Pans Band

Ryan Gibbs

Joan Payne & Chuck Pearson

Chris Stone, Wanda & Donald Variot


Molly & Bryan Hastings, Adam & Stephanie Covington

Fran Scarlett, Pam Teague, Liz Karlsmark

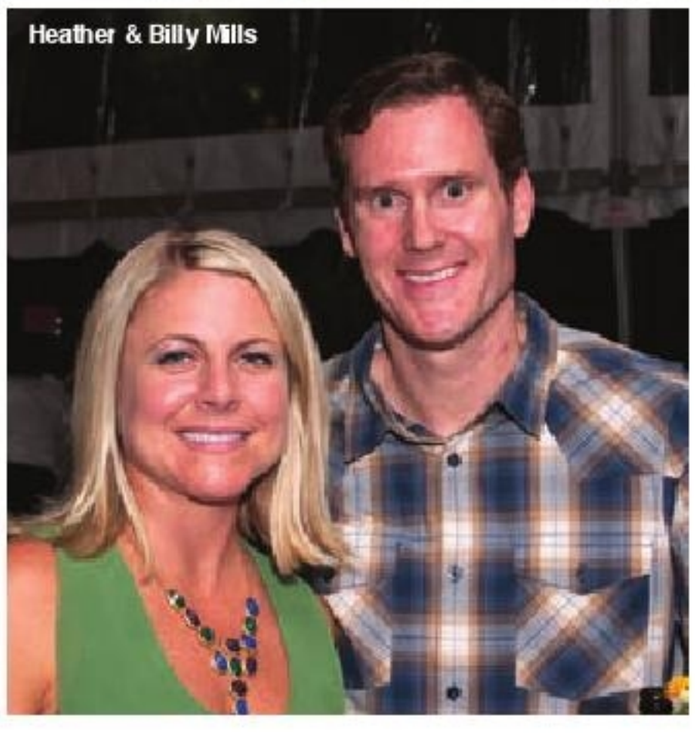
Allison Eggleston, Deana Cook, Patrick Harris, David Eggleston

Frank Potter, Clayton & Susan Gsell, Linwood Gainey

Lisa, Brode, Michael Miller

Bob Wood, John & Pat Hatchell, Nancy Mangum, Lee & Ginni Durham

Sharon Laney, Sandy Spiers, Kelley Brill


Heather & Billy Mills

Port City People

Good Shepherd Center's 30th Anniversary Masquerade

Saturday, October 26, 2013

Photographs by Ariel Keener

Jane Birnbach, Arthur Kareff and Stephanie Lanier

Arthur Kareff, Beth Pancoe, Mary & Dean Gornto, Walter Pancoe

Tim Costello & Kim Nelson

Charlie & Veronica Godwin with Bo Dean & Michael Freeze

Drew Gaertner, Anna Munger, Carly Tanner, Michael Baric

Whitney & Lee Riley

Pam Bannerman & Narissa Hand

Coo & Shawn Hocker, Marie & Stuart Hardy

Dana Fisher, Sandy Spiers, Sharon Laney, Ashley Miller

Kevin & Anna French with Bryan & Lindsay Gowen

Meredith Belcher & Brian Sims

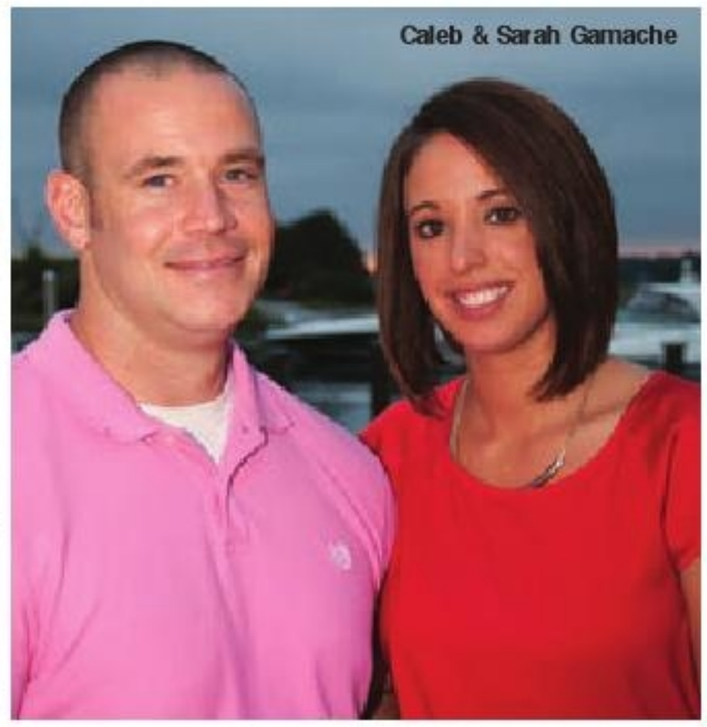
Doug & Michelle Hendrick

Port City People

Taste of Wrightsville Beach
Saturday, October 12, 2013
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Karen Cottet, Bryan Lambert, Heather Cottet, Lisa Thaden

John Horton


Caleb & Sarah Gamache

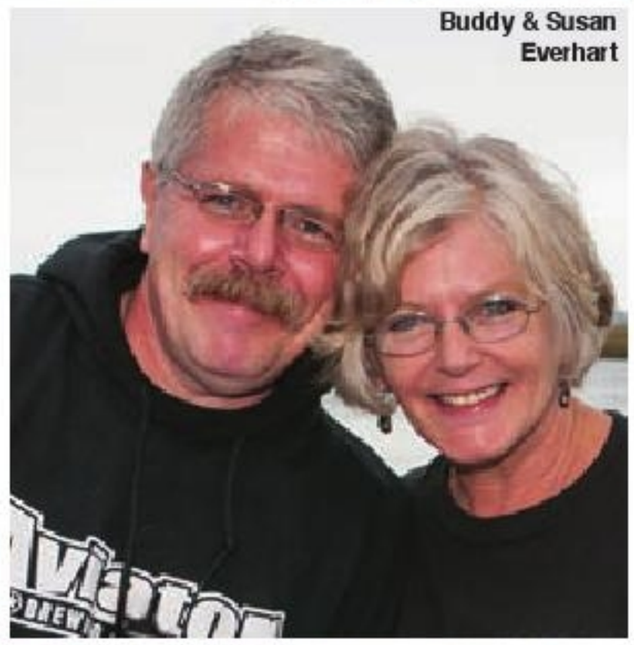
George & Judy Wesoloski

Livian Jones, Sandy Spiers, Lisa Weeks, Sharon Laney

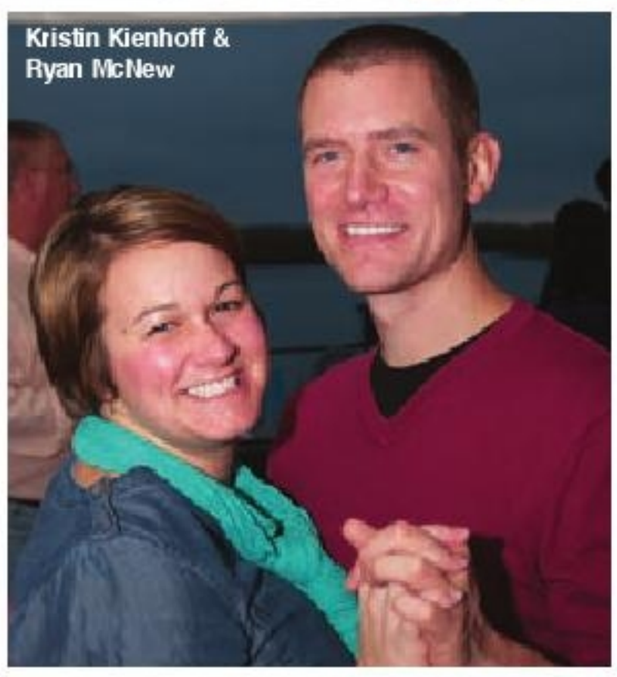
Jody & Rebecca Burke

Blue Tan Band

Stephanie Gerold, Laura Paul, Dawn Hulbert


Buddy & Susan Everhart

Jackie Whitaker, Sandy Spiers, Lori Rosbrugh, Lindsey Harkay, Lisa Weeks, Melinda Chipley, Kathy Gresham, Stephanie Gerald, Ashley Miller


Kristin Kienhoff & Ryan McNew

Cyndi Hall & Bailey Gordon

Port City People

Chords for a Cause
Sister Hazel and the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra at the Kenan Auditorium
Saturday, September 28, 2013

Photographs by Ariel Keener

Chloe Bright, Taylor Campbell, Hannah Faith Knier & Charlotte Farr

The Campbell Family with Sister Hazel

Doctors with the Campbell Family

Sister Hazel

Taylor & Teressa Campbell

Sister Hazel

Sister Hazel

Jill Mora, Grace Granato, Melissa Ovaska, Shirley Lebo, Rick Stinson, Josh Johnson, Beau Gunn, Reid Wallace, Alysa Bostick

Alysa Bostick & Dr. Damian Brezinski with Sister Hazel

Taylor Campbell with Sister Hazel

Continued from page 80

other trucks drove up. I wondered what was the nature of his handicap.

"We'll get you out," I said.

The adult man was out of the truck and walking around looking things over. He had a flat kind of pale face and was wearing a sweatshirt that said "Fellowship Christian Service Camp."

The kid had backed off a ways and was sitting on the sand. About six guys had all gotten out of the trucks and there was this vacant spot in time where you knew somebody had to take over. One guy was carrying two new chains, logging chains, painted gold.

Benny stepped in and started giving orders.

From where I was I thought to look in the cab, over in the floorboard beyond the driver to see if water was seeping in and I saw a paper cup and what looked like the wrapper off a pack of Nabs floating. The water was up to the edge of the front seat. And the water was very cold — this is November, see — and I didn't know the nature of the old man's handicap, so I figured I'd ask the kid.

In the meantime Benny has got a chain around the back axle of the truck — it's hard to get to it — and has got the second chain hooked in its middle to the end of the first one so that you have the chains in the shape of a "Y" and the second chain has both ends free — one for each of the trucks that's going to try to do the pulling.

I say to the kid, "What's the nature of your granddaddy's handicap?"

"His right side is about paralyzed. Daddy told him to go around that hole and he wouldn't do it, and then when we started down he couldn't get to the brake. He does everything with his left leg."

The next ferry wouldn't get in till around noon with a wrecker to pull him out and that would be over three hours sitting in that cold water. The old man just didn't look good. He already seemed kind of pale to me.

"He won't do nothing nobody tells him," said the kid. I noticed his sweatshirt said the same thing his daddy's did.

The two trucks doing the pulling couldn't budge the truck in the water. Benny was running around telling everybody what to do. They just sat there spinning their wheels and digging their own holes, so Benny got the two trucks unhooked and then hooked with one chain apiece close to each back wheel of the truck in the water, then hooked them to the other trucks, both pulled right up close; but the same thing happened — a lot of spinning wheels and revved up engines and the truck in the water did move a little but it was to the left. Benny had just unhooked both chains at both ends when it happened:

Somehow a shelf of sand or something started collapsing out from under the driver-side wheels, and the truck in very slow motion started falling over to the left and somebody hollered and somebody else hollered, and the right front and right back wheels were coming right up into the air. Somebody else hollered and the boy's daddy was up at the rising passenger door in no time, got the door open and went in feet first. The old man had disappeared underwater, but his arm came flailing up, and two or three fellows waded in the water and grabbed at the truck to keep it from turning on over, but that didn't do no good, and Benny was hollering for the guy with the white Ford to get over where he could pull the truck back down level by pulling on the high rear right wheel, and then some new guys that had drove up were getting out of their trucks and getting in the pool and trying to keep the truck upright and it was all like a dream with the son in there all propped on the dash and somehow he got the old man's head up; he had the old man's shirt in both hands and the old man's head was relaxed and hanging like a unconscious boxer's, but the truck kept falling on over very slowly with the sand moving out from under it, I guess, and the water rose right on up in the cab until the passenger-side wheels were way up off the sand, and the old man was under water again, and the son was tugging and pulling and grabbing under water. Now a couple other guys were in the cab and you couldn't tell if they'd got the old man's head above water or not. I was worried suddenly about the truck going on over on its top, but it didn't. The Ford truck was pulling the high wheel now and guys were climbing on the truck to weigh the high end down. It had all happened so fast and there were so many swarming in, I'd just stood there with the kid, but then I started toward the truck and that's when it came right back to straight, settled back to straight up. About six of them, including Benny — he was wearing his chest waders — got him out as quick as they could and on the sand and several of them that were volunteer firemen, I found out later, worked on him for about half an hour until the big Coast Guard helicopter got there. Somebody had called. They got him on a gurney and the Coast Guard guys were pumping on his chest while they loaded him. He was very, very pale, almost blue looking.

A wrecker came on the next ferry and got the truck, and the son and grandson went back to the island with the truck and the wrecker. People had made a lot of calls on their phones. Word went around real fast that they were from Richmond, Virginia, had just got over there on the early morning ferry, that the old man's wife had been taking care of him, and that he'd been a truck driver and was retired.

***

We hung out at the ferry landing for a while and then fished some more on the south point but nothing was biting, though Benny was right: the current wasn't so bad down there.

We had a campfire like we always do, ate bologna sandwiches, drank beer, and sat in our beach chairs listening to Johnny Cash. But we were both kind of quiet because of what all had happened. We just kept saying stuff like, "Man, I can't believe that sand would just shift out like that." "It was like slow motion." "They had to go back home and tell his wife what happened." "Did you see the look on that kid's face?" But we didn't talk a lot. There were some long silences in there. It was like we'd been slammed up against a wall real hard. Or it was that way with me, anyway.

Once we got in our sleeping bags in the tent, Benny brought up what had passed through my mind but I hadn't said anything about.

"Do you reckon they could sue me for causing that truck to turn over?"

"I don't see how they could. You was just trying to help out."

"Did you see his arm flailing up?"

"I did, man," I said. "That was something."

We lay there awhile. The wind was up a little, but not bad enough to worry about the tent blowing away. We had the wind pull the stakes right up out of the sand a few years back. And Benny uses the extra long stakes too.

I got to thinking about that man's wife back in Richmond, finding out that he was dead. I wondered if she made sandwiches for him when he left. She was probably the only wife he ever had. Most old people were that way. I'll bet she was kind of like Brenda, making Benny bring over his fruit and all that.

Benny started snoring like usual and I couldn't sleep thinking about it all so I dragged my sleeping bag out on the sand, wiped the sand off my feet and crawled in and laid on my back with the bag flap under my head so the sand wouldn't get in my hair and there was not a cloud in the sky and there was no moon, no lights anywhere, and I hadn't seen anything like that in ages. "Oh, man," I said and that night sky kind of flushed away the memory of the truck in the water and left an ache. Then I sort of changed that into thinking about Benny and that old man, both of them with a good wife.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir, and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

Christmas on the Wild Side

Take a ho-ho-ho to lunch

By Astrid Stellanova

Am I the only one who thinks it's a crying shame people don't get dressed up for Christmas like they used to? Love, love, love me some flashing Rudolph earrings – used to sell 'em by the gross at the Curl Up and Dye. I say, wear them red pantyhose, reindeer boxer shorts and atomic green Dockers. Give it up for Santa, Honey Chile, because he knows how to work a stretch band pant. Eat another cookie. Take a ho-ho-ho to lunch. Have some cheer, why don't you?

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
Honey, you're on the sensitive side. You go to pieces when people throw surprise parties on your birthday. It ain't that you're unfriendly – you're just Nervous Nellies and Nelsons. So, let me warn you. This month is a test, because nothing is quite going to plan. By the 17th, a full moon will shine a little light on your deepest self. Kind of like a reflection in the well – you may think you're getting a look at Scab Head and Bloody Bones but it's just you – don't let it scare you. All them candles on the cake? Woo hoo – now *that* is scary. And if you plan on living forever, you are going to need a bigger cake.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
Look, Grandpa Hornblower says if everything is coming your way, you might want to change lanes. I'm thinking you got two opportunities to make a big impression – coming and going. A quintile on December 9th is going to make you irresistible to nearly everybody. Even Nearly Everybody will be smitten with you by the 10th. That's something, at least. Hold onto that thought. This may not be your best Christmas of all time, but it will be mellow.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
You may not have been soaring with the eagles lately, but you are beloved among the weasels. You may be asking what hurts so much. It's called your conscience. Usually, you don't notice when them other parts are feeling so durned good. By the 14th, you get a chance to redeem yourself, and by the 25th you are definitely in the center of a transformational situation. You can break with the past, and if you find the courage to do that, the stars align by New Year's Eve for a radically new you to bust on out. Can you? Will you?

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Hellooo – speed bump ahead. You didn't sign on for the pay-off from hard work, when goofing off seems to pay such good dividends. Until now. This is the perfect time to put on your big girl or big boy pants. Some harmonious shifts, an especially productive time in the stars beginning with the 21st both mean you enter into an ambitious time of life. (Ambition is a broad term, Sugar.) But don't get too big for your britches, 'cause like Mama always told us, that good conscience usually means an awful bad memory.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
You are just one big old walking and talking idea, aren't you? When you think you might just be a team of one, you could be right. A full moon on December 17 will leave everybody around you convinced that you may have a whole mess of good ideas, but don't have the good sense to be lazy. And maybe just take yourself a little walk down the straight and narrow and channel some of that fire sign energy. Beau says that he may not always know how to fix the brakes, but he sure does know how to honk a horn.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
Watching a Taurus around the holidays is a lot of fun. You get excited about all the good food, parties and good times, then get all pissed off at the price tag. This month is going to be new and different. Open the mailbox. Some surprises there, for sure. Open your wallet, too. The 12th is when a new Jupiter-Saturn trine is going to change things up by New Year's. Duckies and daisies by January 2.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
Woo hoo! Whoever said detox can't be fun has never heard me give a talk at an AA meeting. I'm normally kind of shy and quiet – typical Gemini – until I get an audience (or a drink). Soul searching might be a new activity for you, though. This month, I am here to tell you that you have got new tack and new saddle and on the 15th, you'll be sitting high on the hoss. But lemme warn you: Somebody is going to be a burr under that saddle come the 26th. You may be feeling generous, but hold back something, Cool Hand. You might just need it.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
If you had to pick between being a bossy boots and being a wimp, what would you choose? Okaaaay: nobody but a Cancer would have to ponder that this long. If changing course means being bossy, do it. Sort of like them duck hunting nuts on TV, somebody's got to run the duck blind if you are going to hunt. Come the 12th, you have got a lot of ambitions synching up with a trine that means it's time to revive a dream you hatched back last summer. There's power, and there's play, but this is a power play you ought not to miss.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
You are making a joyful noise all right, clear through till January as your star sign traipses straight through the too-much-fun-and-games conjunction. OK, that's right out of Grandpa Hornblower's mouth, but he's right at least once a millennia. You can be spiteful or you can be sweet. You can be naughty or you can be nice. But you can't be all those things at once, or you are going to find yourself with a lump of coal and cold comfort. On the other hand, if you were ever going to have to deliver a difficult message to someone who matters, this month would be the time. Your powers are peaking.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
Road out ahead. Take a U-turn now before you hit the shoulder or do a Clint Eastwood. You're like an enigma wrapped in a moon pie. Sticky in the center, and a little bit too much to swallow. Here's what I see in the stars: You have been playing in the sandbox with somebody who could lead you right down the path to destruction. But it feels so right you want to be wrong. And if I'm wrong about this, I owe you a free hair care product.

Libra (September 23-October 22)
Oh. No. You. Didn't. It's like somebody injected you with truth serum. That might be useful by the end of the month. But until then, if somebody, say, your boss, wants you to give it to them straight, do not take that seriously. Save all that honesty for the bedroom, but not the break room. Your emotions are going to be wide open this Christmas. Find a hobby. Get a dog. If all else fails, get a new hairdo. Get rid of that emotion without the verbal diarrhea. Zip it, baby.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
You're stuck in a parallel universe. Don't matter what evidence to the contrary, you swear you're different from everybody else and so are your problems. Kind of like my friend Leonora who thought aliens took all her stuff and replaced it with things that looked almost exactly the same. Sometimes, you just need a good shoulder to drink on, my little Scorpio. You got to choose. Either your face is your best asset, or, well, your backside is. If you want a cheap makeover this holiday, try smiling. Or get that tattoo removed from your left cheek.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Night Sky

By Clyde Edgerton

We'd took Benny's two four-wheelers over on the little ferry. The charge for each four-wheeler is twenty-five bucks. We always take two big coolers of ice and beer, Benny's battery-run CD player, beach chairs, a frying pan, paper plates, a sack of groceries, mostly bread and bologna in case we don't catch fish. Brenda makes Benny bring some fruit and cereal, too. She's always after him about stuff like that. She's a good wife. And we had lots of warm clothes because it was November.

There's nothing on the island but trucks and four-wheelers, and in the middle of the island, twelve cabins clumped together. It's about four miles long, and narrow.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning and high tide had been higher than we'd ever seen it—had pushed us almost to the dunes in some places, and had run by the first dunes in other places.

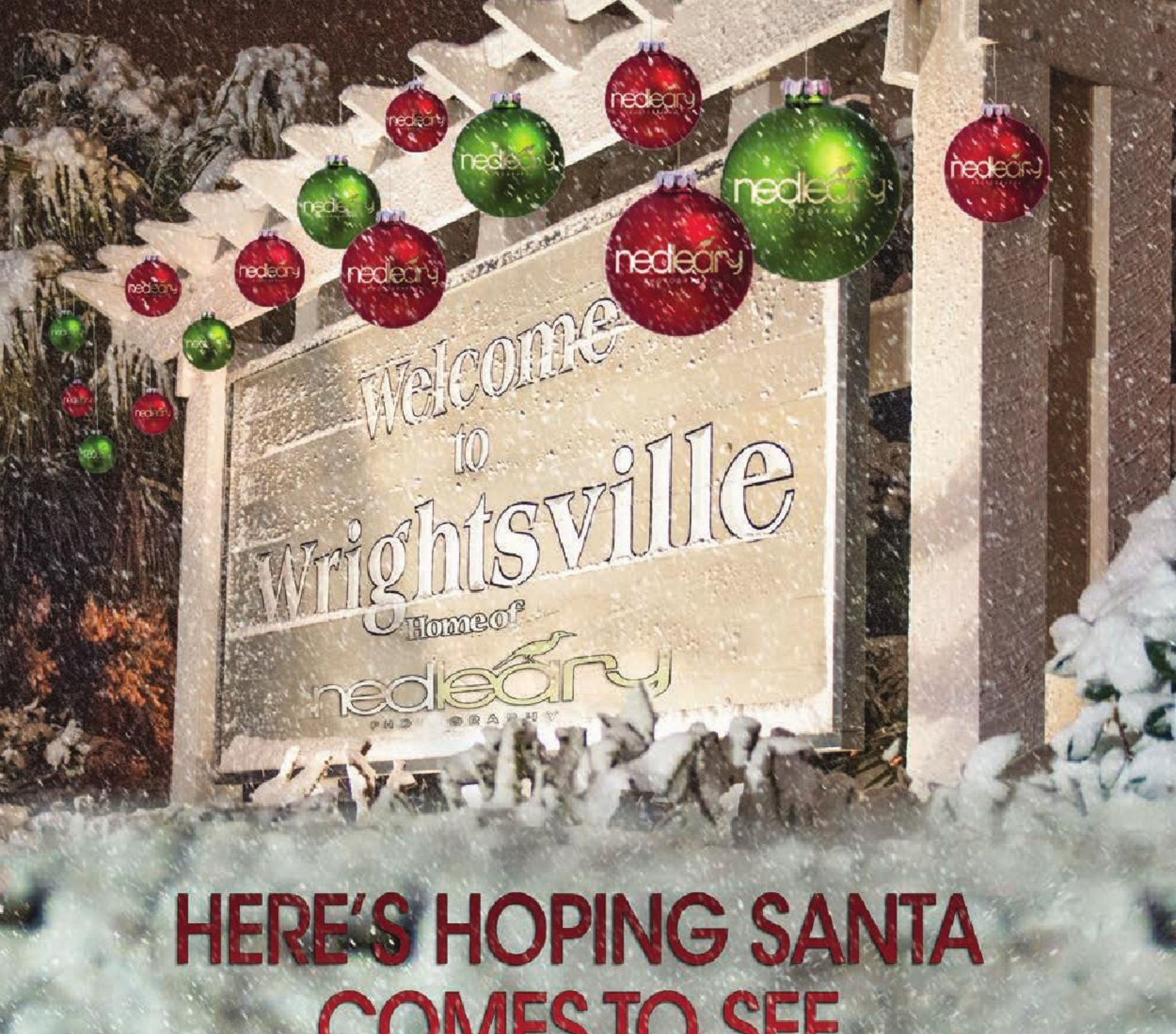
We were zipping along, me on one four-wheeler and Benny on the other when we seen up in front of us a ways, on the beach, what looked kind of like a truck bed hull in the sand. But when we got closer we saw tail lights and it didn't make any sense at all till we got almost there and saw it was the tail end of a pickup truck that had nosed down into a hole full of water right there on the beach—maybe thirty yards from the ocean. The tide had somehow dug a deep narrow river with a big hole and the damn truck had just dropped down into it, whoever driving thinking for sure it won't be more than two or three inches deep and they could just zip right across it. It could have been me or Benny. The water was over the headlights up front and the back end was up some with the rear wheels about three-fourths covered cause they had dug down, spinning. From the tailgate you could step easy onto the sand. It must have just happened because there were no other vehicles anywhere around and there was a blond-headed kid in a black sweatshirt climbing out of the passenger side window. He was maybe 12 years old. He got up out of the window, and down in the bed where there was six or eight rods and reels and boxes and stuff and he climbed over them, over the tailgate, and down onto the sand. The doors wouldn't open, see. I mean, that was kind of clear. He was doing this, getting out, as we drove up. Two more people were in the truck, one still sitting behind the steering wheel, the other now sitting in the window with his arms on top of the truck.

We parked our four-wheelers off to the side.

I could see two trucks coming from the north. I walked around so I could see the driver. His window was down. He was an old man, and you could tell by the way he was chewing tobacco that he didn't have a tooth in his head. He turned to look at me—you could see a hint of fear in his eyes—and stared straight at me and didn't say a word. Then he nodded his head like a how-do-you-do. The two

Continued on page 78

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY BLAIR



HERE'S HOPING SANTA COMES TO SEE YOU!

nedleary

PHOTOGRAPHY

FINE ART LANDSCAPE • ORIGINAL PORTRAITURE

MASTERPIECES
MADE HERE

SAVE UP TO $6,097 ON THERMADOR

One-Two-Free™ Sales Event

Buy the new Pro Grand® Steam Range, the only range with a steam and convection oven built in, and get the Thermador Star Sapphire™ Dishwasher for FREE. It's one of the many combinations that can allow you to turn your dream kitchen into a reality.

For more details visit your Ferguson Showroom.

Offer expires December 31, 2013.

FERGUSON®
Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery

FERGUSON.COM

Wilmington	1925 Dawson St	(910) 343-0334
Shallotte	4640 E Coast Ln	(910) 755-5060

©2013 Ferguson Enterprises, Inc. Promotion valid only on select Thermador models. To be eligible for the free appliances offered in this promotion, all other appliances must be purchased at their regular price, in one order, and at the same time. Products must be purchased and delivered during the promotion period through December 31, 2013. No substitutions will be allowed. Please see product experts for complete details.